

STUDIES IN THE GITA

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Edited by

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M. A., Ph. D.



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SHRI SHIVRAM MOTIRAM SHET

Narvekar of Ajra (Kolhapur)



Birth : 2-8-1882

Death · 26-7-1954

He served God through his services to the people and lived upto the ideals of the Bhagwadgita by leading a life which was simple, pious and devoted to the uplift of the low and the downtrodden.

*To his sacred and inspiring memory
we, very humbly dedicate this book.*

methods have led to different conclusions. Therefore, I decided to approach the Gita in a novel way, with a child-like simplicity. Without drawing inferences from the text, I tried to see whether the Lord Krishna Himself has somewhere brought out the essence of this teaching, and laid it in clear terms : whether the Gita itself has something to say about its message as it has told many things about many matters.

I stumbled on a stanza in this search which says :

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ।

“ I told you, O Arjuna, knowledge which is more secret than the secret one. Do as you will, after examining the pros and cons of the same, with great discretion ”

Next comes the supreme secret

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥

“ Do thou here again my great word which is the supreme secret. I am telling this for thine benefit because thou art so dear to me ”

Then there are two stanzas which can safely be relied on as the essence of Gita. They are as under

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥
सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

After stating this essence of the Gita, —the Lord gives warning and an injunction to the devotee in two more couplets :

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ।

“ This is not to be told to one who is not a devotee, nor to one who is not prepared to strive for it and is an idler : Nor is it to be given to those who have a sense of malice towards Me or have no desire to hear even ”

य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥

“Do thou carry this message of supreme secret to those who are my devotees. Surely, he does the highest devotion towards me and undoubtedly reaches me.”

Is there any doubt in anybody's mind that the Lord has given out the supreme secret, the message of Gita, in the clearest possible terms in the two stanzas sandwiched between the two twin couplets इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यात and सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः... at the top and इदं ते नाभक्ताय...and य इदं परमं गुह्य.. at the bottom ? In the middle stands out the supreme secret of total surrender. This is the image of the Lord i. e. वाङ्मयमूर्ति the Divine Lord Himself in phonetic words.

Inspired words of Rshis are called Nigamas. They are also called Upanisad or Shruti. Gita is said to be the essence of this Shruti or Nigama means the ultimate philosophy, a thing you can go 'thus far and no further' or the last word on Spiritual Wisdom.

All other works where the Lord Shiva himself is generally the speaker and His consort Parvati, is the sole audience, are called Agamas. Agama is defined as that coming from the mouth of Shiva and entering the mouth of his consort, being approved by Lord Vasudeva But here in the Bhagawadgita the Lord Himself is the speaker and his dear one Arjuna, a close devotee, his sole audience. So this is Agama. Hence, the Bhagawadgita is both the cream of Agama and Nigama and hence it is a book of all the Hindus, and for that matter, it is a book of humanity as it contains spiritual truth which can safely be termed as non-sectarian, free from dogmatism.

Pandits may start discussions about the exact meaning of these two very stanzas which I have said, as constituting the core of Gita But I have acquired peace and satisfaction of having found the essence of the Gita; the Lord has said it to be so. सर्वगुह्यतम means the supreme secret. Mine is a very simple way of looking at the whole thing,—getting instructions from the mouth of the Lord Himself rather than through any commentator.

Surprisingly enough, these four lines do not say anything

about the nature of the universe, the creation of the cosmos, nor even about relation of the Soul with God. They do not speak about the Ultimate (Brahma or Nirvana) or any ultimate for that matter. These lines speak of liberation of an individual soul, not to be attained but to be obtained from the Lord Himself by His Grace who has promised it previously and on oath. He has said that He will help us to cross the ocean of grief and we are asked not to bemoan or weep. He will deliver us from all sins and sorrows, but we must give up all Dharmas, Rules and Regulations, sets of moral grooves in which we move and which run parallel to immoral ruts in which we are involve. The Lord has promised this deliverance from both *dharma* and *adharma* to all of us through His dearest devotee, Arjuna, the warrior of Kurukshetra. Kurukshetra is the life of every person. It is composed of two words *kshetra* the field and *kuru* 'you do', that is, a *kshetra* where you are enjoined to do and not sit idle. But when normal rules and regulations fall short and the light of the lamp of *dharma* or religion does not shed any ray on the path and we are lost in the way we are all asked to effect total surrender to the Lord Almighty. We have to fix our mind on Him (मन्मना भव). We are to have single-minded devotion towards Him (मद्भक्तः). All our selfless actions are to be directed towards Him (मद्याजी) and we are to forsake all rules and regulations, moral and immoral ways (सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य). This is total surrender. This is to be effected by one grand salutation (मा नमस्कुरु). This salutation is the first and the last teaching resulting in liberation. By one grand salutation (एकवारप्रणामेन), the Lord with his Grace is pleased and grants deliverance.

Gita is not a book of philosophy, propounding this or that system of metaphysical thought. It is essentially a Yoga-shastra or technique of spiritual union. It is also called 'Moksha-shastra' the science of liberation. Shri Dnyaneshwar Maharaj has said :

गीतायचि चांगावे ।

जे मोक्षोपायरपर आघवे ॥

This is the good thing about Gita that the whole of it is full of means to liberation. But this supreme secret of total surrender

to Him alone is the chief amongst all these means propounded here. This is behind Karma, Dnyana or Bhakti. This is highest Karma or sacrifice. This is highest Dhyana, highest devotion. यजन, मनन, भक्ति. But there is no 'Upaya' or means here. Upaya means : उप means near, ई to go; so उपाय means going near. Here there is not "only approaching but never reaching, a sort of hyperbolic advance". The total surrender is not approaching or reaching god. This is the highest knowledge and highest devotion which is but the same thing. This surrender is effected only by knowing. 'There is only one Lord, neither world nor we, exist apart from Him'. Mahatma Gandhi has said "He alone is, we are not." To know this oneness of God without separating oneself as the Knower is termed as total surrender. So says the Lord in the words of Dnyaneshwar :

आपुले नि भेदेविण ।

माझे जाणीजे एकपण ॥

या नाव शरण मज येणे गा ॥

Knowledge is surrender, the highest form of devotion.

If this is all, why are we taken through the jungle of metaphysical or cosmological consideration ? Why have we 700 steps of the stair-case, winding, winding but not finding, why not one upward thrust and be one with the One ?

We are likened to a fish made of salt, either dead or living. So is our ego. It has no real existence but only ephemeral phenomenal existence like that of the fish of the salt. If this salt-fish is dead, it is simply not there, in the real sense of the word. If it is living, it can only be in the water or out of it, but it cannot be in any other condition. If it is out of water, the fish cannot live; if it is in the water, the salt can only melt and vanish. Such is the existence of our ego. It may exhibit some signs of life, but it will certainly die in the God-consciousness. It will melt like living salt-fish. If there is no God-consciousness, ego's existence is an empty appearance. Common man will not go on inquiring whether a salt-fish is living or dead, because the moment he knows that there is salt in and through it, he knows well that fish is salted only when it is dead. Do we not feel the passions in and through us, as the very salt of life ? This grandiose, favoured fish, namely the Ego, will simply melt as snow under the

sun when we realise that there is one grand existence transcendent as well as immanent. It is existence, absolute; knowledge absolute; bliss absolute. This existence is, in and through, beside and above, the universe presented to us. Existence is the essence of the universe. The universe is the appearance of this essential existence. Realisation of this highest devotion or surrender will lead to deliverance from sins and sorrows.

All metaphysical or cosmological ramifications of thoughts are nothing but different view points. Various world-views can be many but the Truth is one (एकं सत्). While we speak of it in many manners or ways (विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति). all Indian systems of philosophy are liberation-oriented and only different manners and ways of speaking out one grand Truth of the universe. They all speak out the same truth which is not in counter position with any untruth, but is the absolute Truth.

The articles in this volume state that Divine Truth. In themselves, they are so illuminating that there is neither any need nor any capacity in me to hold a candle to this galaxy of luminous Suns brought to our view by removal of clouds of doubt, by great men whom we should be obliged for what they have written.

I am very thankful to Shri Aappasahcb Thakur for allowing me to write these few lines. To you readers of these studies, I am much beholden for bearing with me so long. Here is a treatise on deep devotion, high erudition and wide wisdom. This is all a grand Puja or worship of the Divine Lord. Mine is a wild leaf and a tiny flower, but it stands a sure chance of acceptance by all through love, because it is such an humble tribute. Has not the Lord said in his Song Celestial that He would accept the leaf and the flower as well as fruit and water if offered with devotion ?

I can only vouchsafe that this Foreword is written purely out of devotion to the Lord and to his Song, the Gita and above all, out of love and respect for the writers of this Anthology.

PREFACE

The origin of this book can be traced back to the latter half of the year 1949 when our late beloved Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru paid a State visit to Canada. His itinerary included a visit to San Francisco, where a welcome address was presented to him.

In this address the following stanza from the Bhagawadgita was cited :

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः ससिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥

Shri S. M. Alias Appasaheb Thakur, B A., LL B., Retired District Government Pleader and Public Prosecutor, Chairman, Managing Committee, Gita Mandal, Ratnagiri, came across a summary of this address published in the issue of 3rd November 1949 of the *Times of India* and he wondered as to how, out of the several stanzas of the 'Celestial Song', this particular stanza was selected in that Western country for citation in the address presented to our Prime Minister. The Bhagwadgita is a myriad-faceted gem and it is but natural that its different stanzas might have different impressions upon different persons, according to their own individual temperament and disposition. While Shri Thakur was pondering over this subject, an idea of inviting articles from eminent scholars and philosophers in India and abroad containing their views on 'one or two' verses from the Bhagawadgita which influenced them most and publishing them for the benefit of the whole mankind, flashed upon him, a few years ago. His colleagues in the Gita Mandal warmly appreciated this idea and they decided to follow it up with all earnest-

ness and expedition. Accordingly, letters were sent to several outstanding scholars and philosophers requesting them to contribute articles on this subject.

In response to this appeal, several Gita scholars were kind enough to send their contributions to us inspite of their pressing pre-occupations. Some of them who were hard-pressed for time were generous enough to allow us to reproduce their articles which were published elsewhere. We thank all publishers who have generously allowed us to republish these articles.

Although the Mandal had invited articles bearing on one or two verses of the Bhagawadgita which influenced the scholars most, some contributors sent articles on the broader perspective of the Bhagwadgita. This book, therefore, contains a collection of these articles divided into two sections, based on the category of the subject matter. Most of the articles are original ones and only few of them are reproductions.

In this context, it was thought desirable to make a suitable change in the originally envisaged title of the book and accordingly we have adopted this present title 'Studies in the Gita' as suggested by the Editor of this book, our friend Dr M D Paradkar.

It was our desire to publish a photograph of each contributor along with his article. However, many contributors did not appear to have relished the idea of having their photographs published in this book and therefore did not send them to us. Hence we have reluctantly dropped that idea. We express our sincere gratitude to all the contributors for their kindness and generosity in sending their articles and photographs to us for publication.

The problem of raising finances for the publication of the book was by no means an easy one. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Messrs Narvekar Bros, Madgaon, Goa, for giving us a munificent donation of Rs 5,001/- towards the cost of printing of this book in memory of their deceased father, the late Shri Shivram Motiram Shet Narvekar.

Thanks are also due to Sarvashri K R Limaye, S N Deshpande, V B Mainkar, D L Nene and D G Walawalkar for their valuable spade work like correction of quotations from the Bhagwadgita, Jnaneshwari, and the Upanishads, typing of manuscripts, correction of proofs etc. We are indeed very grateful

to Hon. Shri V. S. Page, President, Maharashtra Legislative Council for writing a fitting Foreword to this book

Dr. M. D. Paradkar, M. A., Ph. D. a reputed teacher of Sanskrit in Bombay readily agreed to sift and arrange the collected material and to edit this book in a proper and presentable form We are indeed very grateful to him for this.

Thanks are also due to Padmashri P. L. Deshpande, Sau Sunita Deshpande, Dr. S. S. Ajgaonkar and Shri Dhananjay Keer of Bombay for their valuable guidance and assistance to us in bringing out this book. We also thank Mm Dr. D. V. Potdar for having shown very great interest in getting this book published.

The donation of Rs. 5001 by Messrs. Narvekar Bros. though generous, was not adequate enough to meet the rising cost of printing and publication. We are indebted to Popular Prakashan, Bombay, for having offered to help us out of the situation and undertaken the responsibility of the publication of this book.

Last, but not the least, we place on record our sincere gratitude to Shri Appasaheb Thakur, but for whose missionary tenacity and unremitting zeal, this book would not have seen the light of the day.

These articles have been written by several outstanding personalities, who have achieved pre-eminence in different spheres of life. We, therefore, hope that the book will receive a warm welcome from all those interested in the study of the Gita.

S. R. SHIKHARE

Gita Mandal, Ratnagiri
President

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THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA

C. Rajagopalachari

“ To endeavour to inculcate in the minds of the people higher principle of morality, religion and culture with a view that they may practice them in their everyday life; to bring about accord between the spiritual and temporal sides of the science of life ”—these are the stated objects of the Ratnagiri Gita Mandal. No better plan can be devised for the uplift and the happiness of our people. Nor, indeed, is there any other plan that can cope with the evils of our time. I have seen other times in my own life. There was not so much total pre-occupation with making money anyhow, prevailing at all levels of society, in those days as in the present time. Corruption has got deeply ingrained in all the activities of men and if nothing can be done for this, the fate of our country is doomed. Hope lies only in the work of men and women working for the revival of *Dharma*.

The Gita preaches high principles of religion, morality and culture with a view that they may be practised in every day life. It is not a book of philosophy. It is a book that teaches how to live. It does not inculcate mere dogma, nor does it set its face against any prevailing dogma. It does not ask people to renounce worldly activities unless one has oneself decided to do so. It teaches men how to carry on worldly activities without detriment to *Dharma* and in a spirit of renunciation. Its teachings are based on a deep and firm foundation of human psychology.

When a man abstains from enjoyment but keeps silently pondering on the things of sense, his mind develops attachment

to such thoughts and out of it springs strong desire. Desires unfulfilled lead to anger, and anger leads to delusion, which destroys discrimination, bringing about man's ruin (Gita II 62, 63.)

What impels man to sin, though he knows very well it is wrong, and he would not willingly be led astray ? Why does he sin as though constrained by some external force ?

Desire and anger which are various manifestations of the element of energy lodged in man's nature make him do so. When uncontrolled by man's higher spirit, passion obscures judgment as smoke obscures light. As a mirror is covered by dust and does not function, discrimination fails to function when covered over and put out of action by desire or anger or other forms that passion takes. Passion is man's eternal enemy. It takes various shapes and, like fire feeding on itself, is insatiable. Check it at the outset. Do not give it any quarter. Otherwise it will overpower you and destroy you, overwhelming your judgment, denying you the benefit of your own experience.

The senses are said to be our enemies. But the mind can control them. Wisdom can guide the mind. Passion can, however, completely overpower the mind and wisdom. It is only if you exert and put forth all your innate spiritual strength to control and conquer desire, that you can cope with this eternal enemy. The practice of self-control is the only way to triumph over this monster. (Gita II 36-43)

Other religions call this *rajo-guna* by the name of Satan and give the same advice : not to allow it any quarter but treat him as a dreadful enemy to be kept out.

The Lord dwells in the heart of every being and by His mysterious power He spins round all beings and makes them act like marionettes pulled by strings. (Gita XVIII 61)

From this follows that we should judge ourselves before judging others. Control over yourself and the power to modify other people's conduct comes from prayer to Him who is the ultimate spring of all action in everyone. The ultimate author of all acts is the Lord. (Gita XVIII 62.)

As individual souls, however, we have the duty to choose between good and evil. You need not wander in pilgrimages to find God, for He resides in your own heart. If you direct your worship there, you will find Him easily and at once, and obtain

the calm that you seek, the undisturbed calm that is better than anything else. All passion, every form of sin, is a disturbance of the calm.

You should be concerned only in doing your work, not in the advantage accruing to you from it. Never should you allow your mind to dwell on what you will gain for yourself, but always exert to do the work that you should do and leave the result to God. Do not misunderstand the teaching of saints and imagine that you should abstain from work. That leads to laziness and neglect of duty. Self-control and detachment should govern all your work. Take success and failure with equal calm. This evenmindedness is what the saints call Yoga. (Gita II 47, 48.)

How shall we remain good and stick to the path of rectitude in the midst of worldly affairs? Whatever outwardly may be your activities, dedicate all your work to the Lord and by an exercise of the mind make it His burden. Continually keep His presence in your mind. Meditate on Him and practise the thought of doing everything for Him and with His aid You will obtain His grace and overcome all hurdles and difficulties, be they in the task, or in the concentration of your mind on Him. If you do not thus surrender yourself to Him in all your work and you let your Ego be dominant, know that it is the way to ruin. Let your mind be ever full of Him, devote your life to Him, offer your work as tokens of worship and reverence to Him "You are dear to me" said the Lord to Arjuna and through him to all of us. "Do as I have taught and you will be saved." (Gita XVIII 61, 62; Gita II 47, 48; Gita XVIII 57, 58)

"You may have strayed from the path of rectitude and committed many an error. Come to me, seek refuge in me with complete confidence. Do not doubt : I shall release you from all sin." (Gita XVIII 65.)

Thus Sri Krishna teaches us how to work and how to live bringing into accord the spiritual and the temporal side of daily life.

ADHYĀTMĀ-VIDYĀ AND HUMAN CIVILIZATION

Maharshi Nyayaratna Vinod

The Bhagvadgita is a self-complete text-book of Adhyātma-Vidyā or the science of spirit. It discusses the Principle of Ātman and all other subjects related to it. It includes Metaphysics, Religion, Philosophy and by implication Ethics, Para-Psychology, and creative aspects of Aesthetics, Music and similar disciplines.

A point to note here, is that Adhyatma cannot be equated with religion, philosophy or metaphysics as these three terms are understood today in their usual connotation. Adhyatma includes them in their essential aspects, but its own scope, meaning and purpose, transcends them all, in a most significant sense.

The principle of the Atman is the first postulate of Adhyatma-Vidyā.

A postulate is something which is taken for granted at the very outset of a scientific inquiry. The term is derived from the Latin root *postulare* which means to require, to need. Existence of *Matter*, occupying space is a postulate for physics. Existence of *Mind* is a postulate for psychology. The Existence and Reality of *Atman* is a postulate, at first theoretically taken for granted, but later, it is also logically proved, actually experienced and practically realised.

In the Adhyatma-Vidyā there is a place for the six well known Pramānas or proofs : Pratyaksa, Anumāna, Upamāna, Shābda and Anupalabdhi. But these are used in the earlier and the penultimate phases of the Adhyātmic or spiritual

progress. The ultimate and the one proof i.e. Pramana peculiar to Adhyatma-Vidya is total Self-Realisation i. e. Atmānubhuti.

The term Adhyatma can be rendered in English by the term "Spiritual". Evidently this is a most inadequate expression but no better seems available. The term spirit is derived from the Latin root *Spirare*, which means "to breathe". Human soul is a breath of God. It is a fine symbological description. But in Adhyatma-Vidya Human soul is God Himself, not just a breath. Adhyatma-Vidya is the way of realising the Absolute Identity of the Human and the Divine Spirit.

Civilization is a progressive revealment of the Divine Spirit through Human efforts and activities. If a civilization runs riot, if it does not refer continuously to the principle of the informing spirit, it becomes decadent and dies soon enough. At the present moment we have reached a point of waywardness, away from the spirit centre which may soon spell a total destruction of Man. Thermo-nuclear weapons have been perfected to a pitch which might soon compel a universal explosion. The only escape from such a disaster, is a complete reorientation of our outlook and a complete redirection of our efforts. We must make room for the Adhyatmic or the spiritual perspective.

What exactly is the meaning of the term "Adhyatma" ?

In the text of the Gita there are seven places where the term Adhyatma is used with varying shades of its meaning. The Master mind of Ādya Sri Shankarāchārya has thrown revealing light on the meaning of Adhyatma. His commentaries on this term give us enough insight to formulate an outline of Adhyatma-Vidya. Who else could guide us better ? Let us study his luminous interpretations of the term Adhyatma. To my mind Sri Shankaracharya has indicated three outstanding connotations of the term Adhyatma : Introversion, Transcendence, and Discrimination.

We shall reproduce the relevant lines from the seven Gita verses and the significant part of the commentaries by Sri Shankaracharya

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा । (अध्याय ३-३०)

The phrase ' Adhyātmachetasā ' has been explained by Sri Shankaracharya as Viveka-budhyā. This means Chetas or mind enlightened by Adhyatma or Ātmānātma-viveka (Discrimination).

ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्म कर्म चाखिल (अध्याय ७-२१)

Here Adhyatma has been explained by Sri Shankaracharya as Pratyagātma-vishaya-vastu. Adhyatma as a science dealing with the content (vastu) to be experienced *inwardly* (Pratyak) as Atman. Pratyak means *inward* (Introversion or Inwardness).

अक्षर ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते । (अध्याय ८-३)

According to Sri Shankaracharya, Adhyatma is Svabhāva. Here Svabhava means Svasya Bhāva. Presence of Brahman itself. In every object or person, the Brahman is transcendently present. In every object, inanimate or animate, there is the Brahman implicitly present. This Brahman aspect or part is the object's own Svabhāva, its own innermost and transcendental aspect (Transcendence and Introversion) Madhusudana Sarasvati, Shridhara and other commentators have followed Sri Shankaracharya in their interpretation of Svabhava and Adhyatma.

अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् (अध्याय १०-३२)

According to Sri Shankaracharya's commentary, Adhyatma is the science of sciences because it describes, "the method of Liberation" (Mokshārthatvāt). All other sciences have no power to liberate the soul because they do not deal with Atman, the Transcendental principle (Transcendence).

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् (अध्याय ११-१)

Here the word Adhyatma has been explicated as Ātma-natma-viveka-vishayam. Discrimination between Atman and Non-Atman constitutes the most secret science (Paramam Guhyam) known as Adhyatma (Discrimination).

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् (अध्याय १३-११)

Here Adhyatma is explained by Sri Shankaracharya as Ātmādivishayam Jñānam the Knowledge, the content of which is Atman together with all the subjects related to it. Here Adhyatma includes philosophy, mental and moral sciences and indeed the whole world of cultural disciplines excluding physics,

chemistry and such other extrovert sciences (Comprehension and Discrimination).

अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः । (अध्याय १५-५)

Here, according to Sri Shankaracharya, Adhyatmanityā means Parmātma-svarupālochane Nityah. Adhyatma, therefore, means Param-Atma-Svarupa; The transcendental form of Atman (Transcendence).

We have noted in seven brackets at the end of seven above interpretations the three outstanding ideas in Sri Shankaracharya's commentaries on the word Adhyatma. The three ideas are—inwardness, transcendence and discrimination. Let us understand them, a little more in detail.

By nature, we are extroverts. Our sensorium has inherently outgoing tendencies. 'Parānchi Khāni Vyatrat Svayambhuh'. Mankind of today is suffering from too much of extroversion. We are caught up in a world of mad stimulations. We are kept perpetually thrilled and intrigued by ever-more attractive baubles and articles of luxury by sheer strength of glamorous publicity.

Not cosmic but *cosmetic* force holds together the human universe of today. We therefore need to cultivate some measure of inwardness. Inwardness means to turn our attention away from the objects, and have it to concenter on the subjective world of Atman and Ātmādi-vastu-vishayam, the inner realities related to Atman.

The second aspect of Adhyatma-Vidyā is a living sense of Transcendental Reality This sense makes us and keeps us dimly aware of the reality behind the shadow-show of the sensory magic. We seem to have too much faith in our senses We believe that they can never go wrong

A straight stick dipped in water shows itself to be curved. A pressed half-open eye shows two images of only one and a single thing A round coin looks elliptical from a certain angle. In spite of all these and several other sensuous experiences of illusion and error, our faith in our own senses, strangely enough, remains firm and unshaken

The spiritual awareness generates a faith in the reality of the invisible and the transcendental. For a man of deep spiritual

awareness, the invisible is far more real than the visible. It is on strength of the "Invisible Roots" that the tree proudly proclaims its visible existence. Madhusudana Sarasvati one of the greatest Indian thinkers has proved that *Dishyatva* or 'visibility' of a thing is a sure sign of its unreality. The world, *Jagat*, is *Mithyā* unreal, because it is "visible" (*dishyatvāt*).

Next we turn to the third aspect of *Adhyatma-Vidya*—a fine discrimination of eternal and ephemeral values. We are living in an age of price-labels on everything. We are fast losing all regard for value. Temples, churches and even homes have lost their sacred significance. Human civilization is taking a shape of a vast departmental store like those in the city of New York or London.

What is exactly the meaning of Value? When a thing is viewed as an end in itself and not as a means to satisfy our selfish needs and purposes, it becomes a value for us. Love and truth, goodness and beauty, justice and honesty are eternal values. They are "ends in themselves". Honesty is and should be a value, not because it is the best policy and brings in more business and more profits. Even if it spells huge losses, honesty has to be practised at all times. Truth is not worthwhile because it gives greater respect, makes for social prestige and sound security. Goodness is and should be really "good for nothing-else" except for its own sake. Beauty is desirable not because it brings better price for an article, but for its own worthwhileness. These are eternal values and they transcend the world of 'barter and bargains'.

We have so far considered the three aspects of *Adhyatma-Vidya* viz. inwardness, transcendence and discrimination.

At the present state of civilization, these are the three principles, which alone can save mankind from total ruination. The three principles together constitute the remedy for the reconstruction of our civilization.

Vedic civilization has survived the outer and inner challenges because it has been founded on the *Adhyatmic* or the spiritual principle of the *Atman*. Of course its original pristine strength has been now lost. However its basic bedrock is strong and sound. The principle of *Atman* itself, informs and inspires our Vedic civilization, and therefore, it is timelessly real, eternally alive and ever pulsating. Our culture has passed through several

challengeful vicissitudes, deadening strains and stresses, but out of all difficult crises it has come up, reinforced and revived. It achieved this victory because it was able to apply the three grand principles Sri Shankaracharya had discovered viz. inwardness, transcendence and discrimination. At the present crisis, we have to rediscover the same sacred thread of the three ideals

Mankind is one and indivisible. The whole of it rises up, or falls down as the spiritual quality of every individual goes higher or lower. No man could ever act or even think a thought, without effectuating a change in the character and destiny of the whole human family.

Our civilization is the sum total of individual behaviours. It will be helpful here, to refer to two world-famous philosophers of history, Spengler and Toynbee

According to Spengler, human civilization is like a plant, a biological entity. It has birth, growth, maturity, decay and death. This process, in the view of Spengler, is altogether certain and inexorable. He saw civilizations as biologic units. He did not, however, view them as 'conscious' or self-conscious entities. He has missed the spiritual element, which indeed is the decisive factor in the whole process of cultural unfoldment.

Toynbee's approach to the history of mankind is both subtler and more comprehensive. In his view, the process of civilization works itself out, in terms of the "Challenge-Response" mechanism. For him, the genesis of civilization is neither in human beings nor in some features of their environment. He clearly states, and I quote, "The fallacy in these views is that it applies the method of material and biological sciences to a problem, that is really *spiritual*." Toynbee actually uses the term "spiritual". In his view, man is altogether different from the material and biological realms, because he is a "spiritual" or self-conscious entity.

Toynbee does not accept nations and periods as units for historical study. He holds that English history, is not a self-complete thing in itself, but only a part of a larger whole. This "whole" contains France and Netherlands, together with England. These three countries are subject to an identical challenge. In his view the units of historical study are societies, and not the so-called nations or countries. A society is inwardly bound by the ties of

common interests, aspirations and affections. Nations and countries are constructions of political convenience. A society is a more real entity, because it is based on the spiritual aspects and considerations of human groups. Toynbee seems to have visualised the 'Spirit' as the most creative force in the processing of human civilization. His idea of Challenge-Response mechanism is a most useful clue for a truer understanding of human history. Environments give a challenge and human *societies* produce the response. If the response is not equal and adequate to the challenge, the society decays and dies.

Toynbee is the greatest living authority on the philosophy of history, culture and civilization. He is the author of ten huge "Tomes" on "Study of History". His word today is accepted as almost the final verdict on any problem in regard to human civilization. After a close and patient study for about twenty-five years, he reaches the conclusion that spirit is the primary and the ultimate principle of human history and civilization. Adhyatma-Vidya is the science of the Spirit. In the light of this science alone man can achieve quicker strides in his progress. Adhyatma-Vidya as revealed in the Gita is the superb technique for man's self-perfection. Sri Shankaracharya's gift of the three-fold sacred thread, Inwardness, Transcendence and Discrimination, is all that we need to accept, assimilate and adore in our life.

India's mission is search for God within and God without. May I close this article with the thundering words of Swami Vivekananda.

"India is immortal if she persists in her search for God; but if she goes in politics or social conflicts, she will die."

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KARMAYOGA

Pandit S. D. Satwalekar

In the Gita an emphasis is given on Karma Yoga, or we can say that this is the most important factor of the Lord's song. Hence this requires a deep deliberation. First, we will discuss the theory of Karma and then see how it may be practicable in our daily life.

The meaning and nature of Karmayoga

Karma means deed, duty, work etc. which is not prohibited or warded off, which is not harmful, which is not done with a selfish attitude, which is performed to worship the Lord and to serve the humanity. To perform one's own duty is to worship the Lord and in the language of the Gita that is Karma

A person must perform his duty honestly and through that only he can attain his destination. After achieving dexterity or proficiency in work, one should not abandon that. Therefore, every one must adhere to his duty. Any one who scatters his attention in various directions can never attain proficiency in any work, hence the Lord says—

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् । गीता ३-३५,
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् । गीता १८-४७
सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् । गीता १८-४८

“ If one's duties are troublesome and meritless and another's are easy to be performed, even then one should not abandon one's duty and do another's ”

In olden times society was divided into four classes : Brahmins, Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras. The criteria of these classes also were the Karmas

Brahmins were entitled to spread knowledge all over the world They were preachers, orators, scientists and so on .

Kshatriyas held the portfolio of protecting the country from external and internal enemies as well Functions of the Navy, Air Force and the Army were under their control.

Vaishyas were to improve the economical condition of the nation through trade To grow and to supply grains to the country was their duty.

Shudras' duty was to serve the above mentioned Varnas

This arrangement of classes includes every sort of duty

Duty must be performed

Every man ought to do his duties compulsorily. Nobody is expected to give up his duties But—

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ गीता २-४७

“ You are concerned with duty only, not with the fruit or the result of the deeds. One should not do one's actions with any expectation of fruit, but one should not abandon one's actions too So, what the Gita teaches its reader is to follow the path of non-attachment ”.

“ Because my action is not to bear any sort of fruit, or even if it bears, I am not concerned with that So I will do as I wish ” This sort of attitude is not appreciated by the Gita. So the Gita says—

योगस्य कुरु कर्माणि । गीता २-४८

“ Do perform your action proficiently”, but even while doing that मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः । Don't bother about the fruit of your action. No matter whether you obtain the fruit of your actions or not, you must do your work ”

The Lord says about himself.

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा । ४-१४ (गीता)

“ I never do my actions with a feeling of attachment, so the actions also do not bind me.” Further he says—

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
 नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ गीता ३-२२
 यदि ह्ययं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
 मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वश ॥ गीता ३-२३
 उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्या कर्म चेदहम् ।
 संकरस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ गीता ३-२४

“ O Arjuna! No action remains for me to do and there is nothing for me to obtain, even then I do perform my duties. If I remain inactive and do nothing, others also will follow me and be inactive; and then a great trouble of confusion or mixture of castes (सङ्कर) will arise in society and consequently the society will be destroyed.” Though there was nothing unobtainable or unobtained by Lord Krishna, he was enjoying all sorts of pleasure, yet he never gave up actions This is an ideal to be followed by all.

If satisfied with their present status, Brahmins give up their duties of preaching and spreading knowledge, if Kshatriyas, with a feeling of selfishness, remain indifferent to their duties of protecting the country, if Vaishyas, act in such a way that all the wealth of the country flows to them only, leave their duties of cultivating land and supplying the needs of the people and if Shudras also ignore their duties, it is needless to say that the nation will be destroyed. Destruction of the nation means the destruction of all So, even when the nation prospers, the different classes must go on performing their duties.

In the doctrine of Karma-yoga lies the importance of the Gita A nation's or a society's progress or down-fall is connected with the activity or inactivity of the People.

Fruit of Actions

So far we discussed Karma and now we desire to discuss the nature of Karma To spread knowledge is the duty of a Brahmin, to protect the country is the duty of a Kshatriya, agriculture and trade is the duty of a Vaishya and to serve the people

is the duty of a Shudra. But what do all of them get in return ? Certainly they earn money through their professions. An action, done by us, naturally bears result good or bad for us, but we should not remain waiting for that. We must go on performing our duties without caring for result.

Forsaking of fruit of actions

To give up the fruit of our actions in charity is called " Karma-phala-tyaga " (कर्मफलत्याग). This is described in various ways in the Gita. The Lord says

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ गीता ५-१२

" One who acts skilfully and forsakes his fruit of action can attain peace. " Here in this verse two types of people are mentioned namely those who renounce the fruit of their actions and those who use the same for their own enjoyment. Of them the first type of men is highly admired by the Gita. These persons are more qualified than those who live for themselves. They are benevolent and perform their actions voluntarily. These selfless workers are the real wealth of a nation. They do not take anything as salary. Here, a question may arise that if they do not take anything as salary, how do they manage to live? The Lord answers:—

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मा ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ गीता ९-२२

" I take care of them, who worship me with a feeling of inseparation. " Those who care for God, God cares for them. In the same way the selfless workers are cared for by the King. A true worshipper never bothers himself about his livelihood. He surrenders himself totally to God.

In the same way a person who serves his country willingly and has no desire to take anything in return, is cared for by the king. One who is free from all sorts of desire is ever satisfied. As the Lord says—

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः । गीता ४-२०

He never hunts after worldly pleasure; so a man ought to do his duty surrendering himself at the holy feet of God.

यत् करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत् तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ गीता ९-२७

“O Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give and whatever you meditate, all that should be dedicated to me (God).” In dedicating actions, the fruits of the actions also automatically go to God.

In this way a worshipper loses his separation and becomes one with his Lord Thus the Gita sees unity in diversity.

The Gita bitterly attacks the doctrine of Karma-samnyasa (कर्मसंन्यास). It is quite impossible to give up Karmas totally,

नहि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् । गीता ३-५

“Nobody can remain utterly inactive even for a single moment”. So the Gita preaches non-attachment and not giving up of actions. This is real Samnyasa; this is Karmayoga.

According to the doctrine of Karmayoga in the Gita, no one is owner or owned, no one is a capitalist or a labourer, no one is a master or a slave, no one is superior or inferior, no one is rich or poor; all are equal, all are parts of the whole and have to contribute the Good of the society. This is the real Kingdom where the Lord dwells.

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ESSENTIAL TEACHING OF THE GITA

Dr. M. S. Aney

It is a dialogue between Bhagwan Shrikrishna and Dhanurdhara Partha. It is heard by Sanjaya who was able to retain it in his memory and to repeat it to Dhritarashtra, through the blessings of Vyasa the author of the story of the Mahabharata-war "Jaya" which appears to be the short title of the Great Work.

In the wars of old times as well as new, some agency such as that of minstrelsy was and is used both in the old East and the young West, to sing the songs in praise of warriors and heroes of the people with a view to rouse the martial spirit of the rank and file of one's party and to awaken in the hearts of the fighting army vindictive spirit of revenge against the opposite party. These songs are sung to the tunes of the war drums, that were beaten and bugles and horns that were blown, to fan the fighting instinct into a burning flame of vindictiveness, to carry on the fight to finish.

This dialogue no doubt took place on the battlefield to Kurukshetra after the opposing armies were arrayed against each other, blowing the conches and beating their drums, to warn their opponents to be prepared for the attack. But when Bhagwan Shrikrishna kept the chariot of Arjuna steady between the two armies to enable Arjuna to survey the whole battlefield and the great warriors with their millions of armed followers standing behind and round them ready to strike at the opposite army on receiving the signal from the leaders, Arjuna the greatest

warrior of world-wide fame of the Pandava Army, was suddenly overwhelmed with a feeling of sadness at the thought of the terrible slaughter of his own kith and kin, which was bound to follow, if the battle would begin, simply for the sake of regaining the land and sovereignty which were their due but withheld by his own relatives through avarice and obstinacy. The mind of this hero of hundreds of battles fought out on earth and even in heaven to help gods, was completely unnerved and it led him to lay down his bow and arrow on the frontal premises of the war chariot and to tell Sri Krishna that he did not want to fight with his own brothers, elders and relatives and incur the sin of killing them to gain the overlordship of a piece of land. "At any rate my wit is at an end I beseech you to guide me."

And the reply which Sri Krishna gave him is contained in the Gita from chapters 2 to 18. This is not a song of a war-monger, the piper that plays the tune that pleases the patron who pays

He expounded the philosophy and the highest principles on which man is called upon to play his part in due consideration of the duties and responsibilities of the position which he has either chosen for himself or in which he has found himself placed and continued to live and work

There is no appeal to the baser instincts of the common man to fight bitterly and even savagely against one who has harmed him, insulted him, harassed him and perpetrated the most diabolical misdeeds against him and his brothers, mother, and wife also. The argument is raised to a higher pitch asking the man to examine his own position and realise what he is expected to do as his duty to humanity irrespective of his selfish or personal interests. That is the reason for Bhagawan Sri Krishna to give Arjuna a vivid vision of the whole creation in the Vishwa-Rupa-Darshan-Yoga, and to show him that the big events in the universe are governed by certain universal laws which are not made by the little man but by the will of an unknown power. Man has not to do anything himself on the stage of this universal theatre of which the Sutradhara, wire-puller, the director and the designer is the mysterious power, in which the world is born, lives, moves and is relapsed. This knowledge alone gives the man the clue to determine his position

in the universal scheme and helps him know the path of the duty, he is entrusted with and expected to play His egoism is completely eliminated in the contemplation of this universal creation that moves incessantly and punctually and eternally.

There is no Satva or anything on the earth, in the heaven, among gods which is entirely free from the influence of the three gunas born of Prakriti, call it nature or Svabhava (18-40). Then the Gita described how humanity is divided broadly under four classes. Sri Krishna described these classes not based on birth but on qualities developed in them according to Svabhava or Prakriti For all these, the Gita has one common formula for salvation viz

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः ससिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ १८-४५, ४६

The man devoted to his own duties gets salvation (ससिद्धिम्). Listen how the man devoted to duty gets this salvation (18-45).

The man gets the सिद्धि i e salvation by *worshipping* (अभ्यर्च्य) him (तम्) by doing his own duty.

He is the cause of the creation of things and has expanded himself throughout the whole of it (18-46).

Then again

स्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः ।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ १८-५६

He who has surrendered himself to me in spite of his doing all his worldly duties, obtains the everlasting and eternal place through my grace

These quotations I have given to show that the Gita has exhorted men and women not to give up their duties in order to be the object of Divine grace for salvation But the discharge of their worldly duties arising out of the position they have chosen, performed in the spirit of selflessness and knowing it as worship of that Eternal spirit, entitles them to a place in the world of Divine grace. The essence of the thing is the knowledge and firm belief in the existence of God as the cause of all that happens,

and oneself a mere instrument in his hand and the second thing, the spirit of unattachment for the fruit of the action. It is this highly developed sense of selfless duty that is contemplated as a step on the ladder to the heavenly place of Divine grace.

Bhagawan Sri Krishna has repeated again in the following verse the pith of his advice to Arjuna, as Arjuna was one very dear to him :—

सर्वगुह्यतम भूयः शृणु मे परम वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥ १८-६४

The most beneficial (Hitam) advice, described as the core of the most secret truth, to Arjuna is repeated once more.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मा नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्य ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ १८-६५

Be god-minded. Be god-devoted. Be sacrificer for god and salute in humility to god. I assure you as you are dear to me, that you will truly reach me i. e. be one with me, the eternal spirit, which was at that time manifest in Bhagawan Sri Krishna.

In my humble opinion, this sanctity of worldly duty and its efficacy as an unfaltering step to the obtaining of eternal bliss, has been demonstrated in no other work, so far as I know, with the earnestness, cogency and the catholicity as is preached in the Bhagavadgita. It is a gospel for salvation of man and not merely of an individual of any locality or lineage. It is a text-book for humanity to read, ponder over and act upon, if they want to be human beings worthy of the Eternal Humane Spirit that is the cause of their origin, their development and their ultimate destination.

I end with a verse repeated by the devotees generally in offering prayers to the God of their devotion.

आत्मा त्व गिरिजापति. सहचरा. प्राणा शरीरं गृहम्
पूजा ते विषयोपभोगरचना निद्रा समाधिस्थिति ।
सचार. पदयोः प्रदक्षिणपद स्तोत्राणि सर्वा गिरः
यद्यत् कर्म करोमि तत्तदखिल शभो तवाऽऽराधनम् ॥

HINDU TESTAMENT *

Arnold Toynbee

The Bhagavadgita has been translated repeatedly into English and other modern languages, and it is improbable that Mr. Mascaro's translation will be the last. The Gita is one of the supreme religious poems. It deals with crucial spiritual problems, and its treatment of them is profound. This is why successive students of the Gita constantly discover new depths of meaning in it.

Translations inspired by such new insights are not superfluous, even if they have had predecessors, and the present translation is welcome because it is illuminating. It is sensitive and at the same time straightforward. Moreover, Mr. Mascaro, in his preface, has managed to put the Gita in its setting in the history of Indian religion, philosophy and literature.

Like the Gospels, the Gita resorts to paradox, and this for the same purpose. The reader is to be shocked into opening his heart and mind to teachings to which he might otherwise have been obtuse because of their difficulty or just because of their sheer novelty.

The poem opens on what is ostensibly a literal battlefield. The hero Arjuna is in revolt at the prospect of killing opponents, who are his kinsmen in order to win a kingdom for himself, and he seeks counsel from his charioteer, who is Almighty God, incarnate.

* *The Bhagavadgita* Translated from the Sanskrit with an introduction by Juan Mascaro (Penguin Classics, 3s. 6d.)

as Krishna God tells Arjuna that it is his duty to fight. He will be doing no wrong so long as he is spiritually detached from what he is doing; and, even if he kills an opponent's body, it is impossible to kill his soul.

In giving this counsel, God seems to be preaching moral irresponsibility as an anodyne for a human being's moral scruples. This is shocking enough to move the readers to look below the surface; and, at every subsequent stage of spiritual exploration, the poem opens the way for the reader to go deeper.

The issue is between renunciation and detachment on the one hand and un-self-seeking dedicated action on the other. Arjuna, in his spiritual travail, asks Krishna which of the two is the higher path. Krishna's answer is that "both renunciation and holy work are a path to the Supreme; but better than the surrender of work is the Yoga of holy work." Action is unavoidable, and "no work stains a man who is pure, who is in harmony, who is master of his life, whose soul is one with the soul of all."

This is Saint Augustine's "Love God and then do what you like." If one does truly love God one will, no doubt, do what God likes. But is God's will invariably good when judged by human moral standards?

Christianity assumes that the answer to this question can only be in the affirmative. This Christian assumption is impugned by some, at any rate, of the aspects of God in the Old Testament, and Hindu minds do not flinch, as Christian minds do, from facing the hard truth that, if God is omnipotent, he must be the author of all the evil in the universe, besides being the author of the good in it. When Krishna, at Arjuna's importunate request, gives this human being a momentary vision of his supreme self, the divine glory is not only terrifying but horrifying. "In a vision", Arjuna exclaims, "I have seen whom no man has seen before, I rejoice in exultation, and yet my heart trembles with fear. Show me again thine human form. When I see thy gentle human face Krishna, I return to my own nature, and my heart has peace."

The reason why Arjuna's heart again has peace is because now again, as usual, he is not having to face the nature of ultimate reality. Is God purely good? Ought a human being to obey God's commands unquestioningly? Is it in his power to disobey them

supposing that his conscience tells him that he ought to ? These agonizing questions are not answered in the Gita. Perhaps they are beyond human powers of understanding. The Gita at least presents them with incomparable force and clarity.

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THE SEARCH OF THE SPIRIT*

K. M. Munshi

A deep urge for something higher has come to me. As I go on my way, I gather and cherish whatever experience this urge brings and it has led me to search after the Spirit.

Since the earliest days that I can remember, I have been subject to a curious restlessness. In my youth I did not feel happy about the prevailing standards of life; although I did not have the will or the strength to rise above them. I could neither conform to these standards, nor was it easy for me to defy them. In an unsystematic way, however, the restlessness always took the shape of an urge to be different from what I was. When this urge was satisfied in some small way, I felt that I was more myself.

Before I entered college, I passed through the normal religious experiences of an orthodox Brahman boy devoted to ritual. Then I passed on to the worship of one God according to the Prarthana Samaj scheme of things. For my B A I studied Philosophy. During the earlier part of my studies, the atheism of the French philosophers of the 18th century satisfied me, though for a brief period only. A godless universe was then a self-evident proposition for me. However, nature as God, and reason as the sole instrument of knowledge, soon proved unsatisfying. Shortly after this the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer, fashionable in the early years of the century, attracted me.

I could not, however, reconcile these changing attractions

* From previous writing with the permission of the author.

to my ceaseless urge for a surer foundation; they were only the symptoms that I was growing out of immaturity. The intellectual acrobatics of some of the philosophers left me cold. Without some kind of definite experience, philosophic thought, I found, had no sure touchstone on which to test its validity

At that time, I did not worry about the nature of God. Mahadeva, my old Guardian God, had an emotional fascination for me; nothing more. The colourless and perfect God of the Prarthana Samaj had lost his appeal for me. However, I continued to sense some illimitable power beyond the understanding of the conscious mind, and in a childish way I tried to get at it

Though never a student of Science, I realised its value both as a discipline and an instrument. But its bounds were expanding with every discovery, and it provided no stable foundation. It did not even have an appropriate phraseology in which to express itself

The scientific study of the conscious and observing mind could never explain how it worked. It did not work according to the laws of physics and chemistry which could be tested in a laboratory. It had flashes of light against a dark background, and often the light varied from individual to individual, but it radiated power, the source of which, however, remained inexplicable.

There was no doubt that Science had acquired considerable knowledge about the outside world, moreover it had some knowledge of how the mind worked. But it did not have any idea of how I worked and lived, how I yearned for something higher and more satisfying; why in my memory, a face or a figure would seize me; how I had the ceaseless urge to reach beyond normal experience, why and how my mind went back again and again to Vasishtha, Vishwamitra and Vyasa, making me feel more myself. In the matters of the mind, Science was groping, but it stopped short where real experience began. By its very first premise, it was incompetent to deal with what was important to me; the power behind things.

Later, when I read something about the materialistic interpretation of history in the works of the Marxian school, I found it just a new and arrogant dogma, attractive to students of the social and physical sciences, but in fact, based on a lop-sided view of human nature.

Psycho-analysis with its dogmas of complexes and dreams

could take me no further. Havclock Ellis, Freud and Jung fixed new labels to my problems; they made a diagnosis with the inadequate instrument of reason. The 'id' and 'libido' of Freud only made an apotheosis of the lower sex instincts; the pseudo-scientific jargon with which this apotheosis was dosed clouded the real aspirations of Love, in which ego and sex were both transmuted into an act of surrender—a consecration.

New labels and clever diagnoses could throw no light on the cure; they could provide no remedy, much less secure perfect health. Heredity, tradition and education were also just labels. Those who proclaimed their new gospel did not actually appear to know what the contents of these factors were, how they worked or whether their workings were just the processes by which something beyond them, by its own power, was developing itself.

I read of scientists who, in the end, found Science insufficient to satisfy the fundamental aspirations and turned to God. I read of people to whom God's grace had come; I had known two or three such men in real life. When in college, I had seen before my eyes the evolution of Sri Aurobindo; the way in which Yoga fascinated him, the sudden change in his life, his swift transformation into a centre of the manifest Spirit. I was in close contact with Gandhiji who was above all a man of God. I also met several people who had studied Yoga, and attained to higher things—not through learning or logic, but by experience.

Many of my friends were just not interested in such things. Several of them were notable men, some were brilliant and highly successful in the ways of the world. They did not feel the need for any search after the Spirit, they would never think about, nor care for, any experience other than that of the world in which they lived.

My case was a little different. I felt sudden attractions. I developed a special relationship with the friends I met, the books I read, the things which happened to me, even with the mountain-peaks I visited or the moonlight I saw. Then an inarticulate longing would take possession of me, a sense of unique personal relationship would come into my life, a creative urge would follow.

Unfortunately, no guru came my way, perhaps I was not a promising pupil. My guides were my own experience; my reading of works bearing on the subjects, personal contact with

Gandhiji which showed me the way he reached to things of the Spirit, my constant recital of the Gita and the Yoga Sutras and later, a dim frequently recurring vision of what I felt to be a divine personality guiding me to some momentous decision

I also came to have a characteristic experience whenever I happened to achieve a real creative effort while pursuing my literary activities. First, my mind would concentrate upon a character or a situation; then thought, emotion and will would throb in unison with it; that led to creative concentration. The produce was always an unexpected achievement, a satisfying creation making me feel different, better than before—more myself

When, as frequently happened, I was drawn into the creative mood by intense longing or ceaseless absorption, a living character or an interesting situation would be born through the medium of words. Sometimes, quite apart from literary activities, a clear perception or an insistent demand would come in the same way; and this had to be accepted or obeyed; no alternative was left to me

I often attributed these experiences to a sensitive temperament or to my early environment. I was never tempted to renounce the world or its affairs; I felt that it was in daily life, that the Spirit was to be glimpsed

A similar experience, which occurred fairly frequently from my earliest days, was like this. I would be possessed by an idea; it would then master me. It would crave for expression through every fibre of my being; my 'self' would become merged into the idea itself. I learnt to call this dynamic unity. Then the luminous idea would take shape in words, often directing life into a different channel; at times an image expressed in words would come true in life—although it might be years afterwards.

Since the earliest days that I can remember, I have had another experience. Acute depression, emotional tension, and a keen sense of defeat were invariably followed by the sudden development of a distinct personality. This personality rose from somewhere, took charge of me and dictated decisions which I had to follow.

I was subject to emotional upheavals. I would then be overpowered by something trying to defy or transcend the consci-

ous mind. In this way I caught a faint glimmer of the Power beyond.

A gulf seemed to separate the life I led from such experiences. I usually moved in two worlds. The impact of the two when they met overwhelmed ordinary life. For a time, they would become one; then they would drift apart; but the impact would give expression and shape to the life I led.

I found this pattern of experience repeating itself, and therefore it became important for me. I often looked forward to its recurrence. The life I led, my ambitions and hopes, the achievements and disappointments of my struggling career, my reasoning faculties and my sense of realism contradicted these experiences. Only the phrases of the Gita and the Yoga Sutras, often conveying a meaning not given to them by commentators, came to support my experience

This convinced me that nothing in my life had any meaning except as the expression of the urge which brought about this impact. I recognised it to be an urge distinct from other, normal ones in quality and intensity. For when it came, I became different and unexpected results followed

In this way the adventure of the Spirit began for me.

I had another experience. Worries depressed me, impatience and fears caused disquietude and tension, but they were, to a large extent, banished when the urge was invoked and it came. This invocation took the form of either prayer or concentration on something which transcended me; and it always provided an unexpected solution. This Something, I realised, was God.

The habit of submitting myself to His will grew, for it brought peace, strength and joy. It created conditions in which I felt that His will became manifest. When this manifestation came, the difference between my desires and their accomplishment faded. I found that life was not a struggle but a fulfilment. Duality gave place to unity. My free understanding and my fate became merged in one.

This experience I called nearness to God, and it inspired in me a longing to be His instrument, in the sense that Sri Krishna tells Arjuna to be. "Be thou my instrument, Arjuna."

This reminds me of an unusual and plausible definition of

God which Jung gives in one of his works. According to him, God is our own longing to which we pay divine honours; the reflex representation around which feeling is grouped. This is how the intellect views experience of this sort. An ennobling experience is nothing more than self-deception!

As to the Spirit, however, intellect is of little help. It only leads to the process of turning a man into an insect. By calling God a longing, I am no wiser, certainly not better. And God is not longing. It is something not only longed for but felt and perceived, attained to and in more gifted men, achieved; and it leads to unfading joy which nourishes, strengthens and creates.

But this joy only comes after a search which begins in humility and avoids the arrogance of the intellect.

This Joy—*ananda*—has many forms, freedom, light, beauty, love and bliss. The urge which seeks it may, therefore, more appropriately be called a fundamental aspiration for it distinguishes man from the rest of the creation. Never in all history has this urge in man been stifled for any length of time.

No matter what means are used, this urge cannot be killed. For in that event, man would either be frustrated or become a monster, and should he survive either fate, he would degenerate into an insect. But this is not evolution; it is the reverse of it.

To nurse this aspiration; to strengthen it by rising above the limitations of attachment, wrath and fear, to transform oneself by the experience of being habitually near to God; to act only as His instrument and thereby transform oneself into a wider Self, and through such a transformation, transform life itself: this is the only way to achieve the destiny of man. This is self-fulfilment. This is the way of true evolution.

This is true religion and man cannot do without it

REMEMBER THE MOMENT OF DEATH.*

Acharya Vinoba Bhave

In this Chapter (i.e. Adhyāya VIII) it is stated that the thought that is uppermost at the moment of death prevails in the succeeding birth. The soul sets out for the journey ahead, with this provision for the way. Taking today's earnings with us, after a night's sleep, we begin tomorrow. In the same way, with the accumulations of this life, after the heavy sleep of death, we resume the journey in the next birth. The end of this 'janma' is the beginning of the next. Walk through life having in mind the hour of death.

This is necessary also because we should conquer the fear of death and make it easy to cross over. There is a story about Eknath. A man asked him, "Maharaj, your life is so simple and sinless. Why is our life utterly different? You are angry with none, you quarrel with none, you hate none. How calm, how loving, how pure you are!" Eknath replied, "Never mind me. I have found out something about you. In seven days from now, you will die." Who could disbelieve Eknath's words? Death in seven days? Only 168 hours left. Oh, God, what a calamity! He ran in haste to his house. Nothing seemed clear to him. He was talking of disposing of his affairs and preparing for the end. Then he fell ill. He lay flat on his bed. Six days passed. On the seventh day, Eknath came to visit him. He greeted the saint. Eknath enquired, "How are you?" He

* From *Talks on the Gita*, Pages 98 to 103 'Remember the moment of death' with the kind permission of Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

said, "All is over Now I am going " Eknath asked further, "In these six days, how many sins did you commit? And how many sinful thoughts came into your mind?" And the man who had been awaiting death answered, "Lord, where was the time to think of evil thoughts? Death stood ever before my eyes." Eknath said, "Now you know the reason, don't you, why our lives are absolutely sinless. When death, the Lion stands always before us, how can evil thoughts appear? Even to sin, one needs freedom from anxiety. Constantly thinking of death is a means of avoiding sin. If death is always staring him in the face, with what strength can man commit sin?"

But man tries to push away the thought of death. The French philosopher Pascal says in his *Penses* ("Thoughts"): "As men are not able to fight against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think of them at all. To be happy he would have to make himself immortal, but not being able to do so, it has occurred to him to prevent himself from thinking of death."

"Death is always standing behind us. But man's effort to forget it goes on all the time. He never considers how to live remembering death." Man does not like even the word, "Death". If at dinner the word is uttered, we cut it short saying, "How inauspicious!" But every step we take is a step that takes towards death. Once we buy a ticket to Bombay and sit in the train, though we keep sitting, the train will carry us to Bombay and deliver us there. At birth we take a ticket to the destination, death. Whether we sit still or run about, death is certain. Whether we think of it or do not think of it, it will come. However uncertain all other things are, death is certain. As the sun sets on the western hill, it has devoured a portion of our life. Thus our days decrease, life tapers off, drop by drop the cup is emptied—but man takes no notice of all this. Jñaneswar says, "How curious!" He wonders how men could be so thoughtless. Man has become so frightened of death that he cannot bear even the thought of it. He tries to keep off all thought of it. He sits down bandaging his eyes. Soldiers going to the front play, dance, sing and smoke, to forget death. Pascal writes, "The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this is the greatest of our miseries. For it is this which principally

hinders us from reflecting upon ourselves, and which makes us insensibly ruin ourselves . . . Diversion amuses us and leads us unconsciously to death."

"Though he sees death everywhere, the soldier loses himself in eating and drinking, singing and dancing, all in order to forget it"

We are all like the soldier Keeping a round, laughing face, if it is withered, applying cream and powder, and dyeing grey hair—all this, man does. Death is dancing on our chest, but we try endlessly to put it out of our minds. We are ready to talk about all other things, but not about death You ask a boy who has just passed his Matriculation, "What do you propose to do?" He replies, "Don't ask me now; I am only in my first year at College" If you ask him again the following year, he would say, "Let me first finish the Intermediate, there will be time enough to worry." And so it goes on But shouldn't one think in advance of the future? Should not one see the path in front clearly before taking a step, to avoid pitfalls? But the student shirks this task. What the poor fellow studies only serves to shed darkness on the path ahead So he takes good care not to ask the question 'what he could do in life'. He may be surrounded by darkness on all sides, but he cannot prevent what is bound to come; it will surely come about

The Professor of Logic begins Deduction at College: "Man is mortal Socrates is a man Therefore Socrates is mortal" But why bring in Socrates; why not cite his own example? The Professor too is mortal But he never says, "All men are mortal Therefore, I, the Professor, am mortal, and you the students too are mortal" He passes on to Socrates the liability to die, for Socrates, luckily, is already dead. He is not likely now to stand up and protest. So the teacher and the pupils establish the mortality of Socrates, and as for themselves, enter into a conspiracy of silence. They fancy that they have warded off danger thus.

In this way, people are all the time making heroic efforts to forget death But can one ever get rid of death by such means? Only the other day when my mother died, death stood before me But there is a way of conquering death by thinking fearlessly about it; but this way we dare not seek and find. A lion pursues

a deer. The nimble deer flees in fright, but soon it gets tired, and its strength fails. But Death in the form of the lion pursues it. The state of the poor creature at that moment is indeed pitiable—it cannot even look at the lion. It buries its antlers and face in the earth, and stands helpless, as if inviting the lion to come and devour it. We too dare not face death. But although we try all tricks to run away from it, it is powerful enough to catch us at last by our neck.

And when death comes, man takes stock of his life's accounts. The stupid and lazy candidate dips his pen in the inkpot and takes it out, but he cannot collect enough courage to blacken the paper. My fellow, do you mean to start writing, or don't you? Surely, you don't expect Saiswati to take the pen out of your hand and write for you? Alas, the three hours are over; and he folds and submits the paper blank, or with few lines scrawled on it. It does not occur to him to try to understand the questions and answer them. He wastes his time looking this way and that. Our plight too is no different. Therefore, remembering that death is the crown of life, we should constantly practise the means by which we can make our last moments holy, pure and sweet. From now on we should think what we should do to impress on our mind the most noble and beautiful *samskaras*. But who worries about acquiring good *samskaras*? Instead of this, day and night, the training in bad ways goes on. We teach the tongue, the eyes and the ears to be greedy. We should give a far different training to the Chitta, the mind and heart. We should steep and dye the Chitta in good things. From the instant we discover an error, we should try and correct it. Once we know it is a mistake, how can we go on doing it? The moment we discover a mistake, we are reborn. Then begins for us a new childhood, a new dawn in life. Now we are truly awake. From now on we should examine our life day and night and walk warily. Else we shall slip, and fall into bad habits again.

Many years ago I went on a visit to my grandmother. She complained, "Vinya, I remember nothing these days. I go to fetch the ghee-pot, and then come back forgetting all about it". But she talked to me about some trouble about a jewel which occurred fifty years earlier. She could not remember what happened five minutes before, but something fifty years old was still fresh

in her memory. How to account for this ? She must have been talking about the jewel—affair again and again to a great many people and therefore, it had become a part of her life. I prayed within myself, “ Oh God, don’t let my grandmother think of the jewel at the time of death ! ”

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TOWARDS A NEW WORLD ORDER — THE GITA *

Shri Shankaracharya (Dr. Kurtakoti)

Varied and various are the solutions that have been suggested for the numerous problems confronting the world at this critical point of time. Arguments have been adduced by or on behalf of their different protagonists to emphasise the correctness of their pet theories developed from their own analysis of the world-situation. But none of them has been so far satisfying. Let us see how the Bhagawadgita views the self-same problems, how it envisages they should be dealt with and what solution it offers. For, the Gita is peculiarly and specifically a Crisis Book. It serves as a guide to victory in the epic war of the Mahabharata. Antecedent to the actual clash of arms, it marks the culmination of the intellectual conflict—the counterpart, if you like, of the war of nerves, but quite different from it, between the futility of non-resisting inaction and submission on the one hand, and the inevitableness of a struggle and ultimate equipoise on the other. The same drama as of today perhaps is enacted there : rights denied—peaceful settlement spurned—violence and aggression increasingly triumphant and the climax, a war to the finish, resulting in the establishment of peace, but only subsequent to the triumph over the doubts, despair and despondency assailing the mind of the victor-to-be. And victory at last. In the terminology of war, the

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\* This forms the summary of the concluding chapter from the author's book 'Equality—A study in the Bhagawadgita' from the Modern Review, Dec. 1942 with permission of the writer

Gita was the Emergency Measure promulgated on the battlefield—the measure that helped and hastened the war to victory. Revealed on the battlefield and meant to revive and inspire the hesitant warrior, it is yet the Book of Peace, for, it evolved tranquility out of conflict, faith out of doubt, order out of chaos. Thus the Gita today fills the bill to the full.

The world, as we see at this juncture, looks complex and contradictory. There confronts us a bewildering array of ugly facts, a baffling series of misfortunes for the good and an unending succession of sordid phenomena, so much so that we are prone to wonder, if they at all permit of being analysed to arrive at the root cause. But a careful study would reveal that the world suffers from one and only one major ailment and not from a myriad diseases. In the cliché of the present day, it may be dubbed the Problem of Poverty—stark naked poverty, of every kind on every plane of life. Scarcity of food, lack of work, want of understanding, absence of faith, starvation of the intellect, need of comradeship, dearth of compassion—and what not. And if satisfaction is rare, contentment is unknown. Poverty, then is the problem in general, affecting humanity as a whole and its entire field of activities, though one facet of the problem may be more acute here, another more obtrusive there and a third more persistent elsewhere on the earth. This circumstance only tends to make it more perplexing and apparently more difficult of solution, so that it becomes what might well-nigh be called the problem of problems. And then every country, class, or clime, has its own problems major and minor, immediate and ultimate, religious and political, social and economic.

If poverty be the main problem, then the solution that suggests itself to reason is one for liquidating that poverty of mind and matter and means. That is to say, we should concentrate on achieving the opposite of Poverty, namely, Fulness or Abundance. So, poverty must be abolished and plenty made to take its place, scarcity should go and abundance come in its stead. But will that help to solve completely and once for all the problem? No, emphatically no. For poverty is only the result of plenty. That is the paradox. They are the inevitable ever-recurring sequence of each other, one the counterpart, or can we say, the complement, of the other? If poverty is one end of the scale, fulness is the

other. In terms of relative Time and Space where we have our being, abundance is nothing else than gaining at one and depleting at another. Accumulation of necessaries implies that some others be denuded. And we know that soaring mountain peaks can only be measured in terms of pigmy foot-rule, familiar to human conception. Shallow waters only enable us to comprehend the unfathomed depth of seas. We do even reckon the immeasurable Eternal Time by the seconds. And as for the immortal Soul, we seem to take cognisance of a birth as the only beginning and to be aware of death as the certain end.

As long as we fail to realise this fundamental paradoxical principle in life, so long will we fail to arrive at the correct solution of the Problem. That is why history bears ample testimony to the fact that Human endeavour at reform or revolution, has ultimately ended in failure. Reforms engendered reaction. Revolution brought in its wake counter-revolution. And in most cases the remedy proved worse than the disease. It seemed so perplexing that they called it the Law of Cycles and left it at that.

Religion was ostensibly meant to establish peace and goodwill, but in practice, too much of organised religions has been the one endless and unending source of strife and hatred amongst men, and the root-cause in keeping the human family divided. Prophet asseverated the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but has been found in effect to have left a legacy of warlust and vandalism and mischievous proselytisation. A Messiah chanted the Gospel of Love, but it was corrupted into supporting an Inquisition or a Star-chamber and has been now turned into a mercenary Message as an instrument of mass conversion. An Enlightened One preached the attainment of Peace, but practice has made it a soulless passivity of inaction. In spite of all the religious teachers, faith today is a faint name. Fanaticism alone reigns supreme and passes for faith. Belief there is, but is a prelude to bigotry. There is prayer on the lips, but murder in the heart.

Turning to the political field it is a case of confusion worse confounded. Monarchy once flourished, then foundered and now fades out. Still, many "Kings" endure, in all walks of life without the least tinge of kingliness. Democracies have been evolved but dictatorships have been consummated. Capitalism has led the way to Communism. Political individualism has been swept away

by succeeding waves of socialism. The so-called civilized Christian countries have accommodated themselves almost complacently to barbarous militarism. And the establishment of a League of Nations has been succeeded by innumerable undeclared wars of unchecked aggression. Lust for land and greed of wealth have become insatiable. Every power wants an empire and nobody is prepared to release an inch of land—other peoples' land—annexed by brutal force, conquered by treachery, taken by stealth or grabbed in other questionable manner. Empires have not changed their ways, but have taken up masks of differing names. They have used every artifice and pretence to retain their possessions, if they could not add to them. The Empires' mere "possessions" slowly got transferred in name—only into colonies, dependencies and more respectably "dominions" and latterly to the grandiose name "commonwealth", the one idea being that whatever happened, the imperial country should have its unshakable and unseverable hold on the "possessions". They want to maintain at any cost the status quo. The possessions also naturally want to possess some land at least their own, if not other peoples'. And thus the tug of war for freedom and self-determination goes on within the empires. And then great empires themselves fly at one another's throat—almost in a death-struggle.

There is also chaos on the social and economic planes. While distances have been eliminated, neighbourliness has ceased to have much meaning. The hand of one man is readily raised against another man. Increasing contact of the peoples of the world has only increased envy and hatred. Worse than the snarling and fighting denizens of the jungle, have the men become transformed. Production has increased, means of production have multiplied, scores of new opportunities for work have been made available, communication and transportation have been made easy and cheap, more and more money has been put into circulation; and yet with all these improvements, facilities and advantages, food is scarce, unemployment is rampant, free intercourse of peoples and goods has become impossible, labour-saving devices give no rest to the toilers. Only famine, disease and death are easy, free and abundant.

Civilisation boasts of taming cannibals who killed to feed, but preaches blood-thirst and legalizes slaughter of innocent

human lives Civilisation boasts that slavery has been abolished, but keeps in bondage the vast majority of the human family and condemns them for life to unredeemed misery. Civilisation boasts of discovering lands and countries that had existed for aeons upon aeons and tries to encompass this wide expanse of God's good earth in imaginary border lines and frontier walls. Civilisation boasts of having emerged out of the Stone Age and done with the caveman, but has built the slums that would make the cave-dwellings flush with elation and encumbered man with death-dealing machines Civilization is thus a mere name, only savagery persists Such, in brief, is the state of our present day civilisation which has become a process for the rapid multiplication of human vanities and miseries instead of an attempt to help humanity to live and thrive. To this extent under the stress of modern civilisation man becomes more dependent on external circumstances and has become a mere creature of Nature instead of realising that he has it in him to transcend her trammels.

These then are the signs of our time.. Such are our problems in general. There is one distinct feature in the world unrest, and that is the universal conflict of interests. It might take the form of a struggle against imperialist domination of one nation over another, or it may take the form of resistance to one group lordling it over another within the same nation. It may be the attempt of a suppressed culture and civilisation for self-expression and growth, or it may be the revolt against the persecution of one race by another, whether it be the Jew in Christendom or the coloured "native" in Africa and America It may manifest itself as the familiar struggle between the haves and have-nots. Thus broadly speaking we see political turmoil, cultural antagonism, racial conflict and economic clash all in one form or another throughout the world.

From a bud's eye-view of the world situation in general, it can be asserted, speaking relatively, that the West is responsible for the unrest and turmoil that is evident all over the globe For, she has made herself the mistress of the earth enslaving the natives and suppressing their culture. Time has come to be computed according to her calculations, culture and civilisation have come to be measured according to her standards and life and labour have come to be shaped according to her behests Currency and

exchange are manipulated to suit her interests, trade and commerce are carried on for her sole advantage and political and economic "developments" engineered for her benefit. Thus the West has become dominant throughout the world. Yet there is no satiation for her lust for power. The greedy countries of the West are now again in a death grapple of inhuman war to determine or demonstrate their own individual superiority of brute force. God fulfils himself in many ways, we witness today in this terrible spectacle of war-torn and bloody Europe whose "empire countries" are fighting one another to "save" or "secure" empires.

It was these super-Christian countries that perpetrated the "discoveries", that is, stealing other people's land and despoiling the little happy coloured children of God—the black, the brown, the yellow and the red inhabitants of the earth. It was their civilization that perfected the art of brigandage as a political testament and spread slavery and economic exploitation throughout the world. Beginning with the Christian "visitations" centuries ago, the tragic tale of pillage and plunder has not yet ended. Even when hidden across the wide seas, behind barriers of high mountains and kept far from the preying eyes of these Christian Powers, the happy lands of the Earth could not continue their isolation and peaceful life. They could not escape the European Empire-builders. And today the cycle of Karma has come its round and European countries are expiating their past deeds of robbing the freedom of others. Karma is taking a heavy toll. Out of all this deluge of death, a new and better Europe and world will emerge which may recompense for all that is past and gone. The white Man's burden will have vanished—will have evaporated. There will be no colonies—only peoples' homes; there will be no empires—only human families; there will be no 'haves' and 'have-nots'; none will grab but all will equally possess. There will be only natives of the world and none will be a non-native, unless he be a visitor from another planet.

How then to achieve this universal peace and amity, how to bring about this equitable state of affairs? These are the questions that are exercising the minds of thoughtful leaders of many countries. They are also formulating their schemes for a new world order meant to establish concord, engender goodwill and sustain a commonwealth of the earth. Let us see how the Gita helps us in this task.

As has been pointed out, the Gita is a by-product of a war, the biggest of those times perhaps—a war to end wars—then as at present Sri Krishna here demonstrated to Arjuna the futility of his supposedly benevolent action, the extreme of inaction against the other extreme of aggression, and urged him to view things in their proper perspective and not to lose his sense of proportion, his sense of equanimity. This, Sri Krishna called Samatva (समत्व) and declared it as the basis of life.

Samatva is a Sanskrit word not easily translated. It means equality—not envisaged as an ideal but asseverated as an ideology and as the correct ideology of creation as well as of human endeavour. Samatva connotes the subtlest abstract as well as the most concrete quality of equability, 'equanimity' equilibrium and equality. Samatva is the explanation of creation as it were : it is also the process of evolution, the basis of the universe· the *summum bonum* of Existence. Samatva of mind, Samatva of means, Samatva of purpose . equanimity of temper, equipoise of attitude, equilibrium in daily life and equality in society—the one as necessary as the other to achieve the equability of spiritual perfection and to realise the truth of creation which is equity. Samatva is almost a prefix connoting the "equiness" in all planes of life. It is a substantive, literally meaning equality that predicates the entire nature of the universe in creation, in evolution and in absolution. It is not only a mere mental postulate or metaphysical abstraction. It is and it must be understood to be a concrete reality, a physical possibility and an everyday phenomenon. It is both subjective and objective. This is the refrain of the Gita and it is this message that has a direct bearing on the present conflict and unrest and tension. It is this aspect of the Gita that will help us to rebuild for ourselves a world, from which will have been swept away all the terror of the horrible contrast of Plenty and Poverty, of science and ignorance, of culture and barbarity and of faith and fickleness. It is only through this Samatva that we can hope to establish and attain to enduring peace in the world.

Sri Krishna, after propounding the Ideal of Samatva as the basis, the being and the becoming of all Existence, unfolded to Arjuna how he could realise the great truth, attain to that knowledge and experience that Bliss. The discourse embraces all strata of creation and all planes of consciousness from the



dormant mundane being to divine creatures of higher spheres, from puerile ignorance to conscious realisation

Sri Krishna first dwells on the fundamental reality of the great Symphony of Existence, the need for all that are, the use of all that be, the seemingly inextricable conglomeration, the complexity, the diversity and the conflicting variety—but all ultimately resolving into one single, simple, harmonious, undivided Entity. He then explains the relative values in life—the grades in attainment and the planes in the evolution—so that Arjuna may understand, beyond the shadow of doubt, true from false, may be able to differentiate good from evil and so strive to attain the Eternal instead of the ephemeral. The Lord disabuses the latter's mind of many false notions and finally unfolds his plan to achieve perfection.

Let us follow the same course. Because the Gita was a personal advice to a certain individual at a particular period of time, it cannot be argued that the world problems were and are beyond its scope. It does not need much stretch of imagination to conceive Arjuna as symbolising mankind, for his other name was Nara, man. So there is scriptural sanction for taking the Gita not as a mere talk to Arjuna, but an object lesson to all humanity throughout eternity. Therefore, the ideal life taught to him may be looked upon as the ideal existence and the way of living prescribed to him may be regarded as the Path of Progress destined for all

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## THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE GITA

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Swami Ranganathananda

Among the leaders of thought and action who have appeared on the Indian horizon, none stands so unique for nobility of thought and versatility of character as Bhagawan Sri Krishna, the great teacher of the *Bhagavadgita*. With the increasing popularity of the *Gita* in modern times, a growing appreciation of the personality of Sri Krishna is becoming evident. In the West, Carlyle, Walt Whitman and Emerson were the first to respond to the spiritual beauty and philosophic depth of the *Gita*. Did not Burnouf, the French translator of the *Gita*, write that no greater book has ever come from the hands of man ?

In his preface to the English edition of the *Gita* by Sir Charles Wilkins, Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India, declared that "the writers of the Indian philosophies will survive, when the British dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance". Since then, many a thinker and poet in the West has sung the praises of the *Gita*.

It is significant that it is one of the few religious books in the world which has not lost its appeal to the modern mind. The modern mind, let us note, distrusts all scriptures, and has lost that abiding faith in the values which traditional religion offers. The full fire of modern scientific criticism has been directed to the scriptures of all the religions of the world and the results have been disastrous to a degree to both of them. It is becoming increasingly difficult to live on mere faith especially when such faith does not accord with verified truth. There is doubt and questioning prevalent everywhere. Those minds

that have been drawn into the vortex of the conflicts of thought and opinion have lost all faith in doctrines and creeds which could satisfy minds of more placid ages, and are searching for the rock of truth where to rest their minds. There is an insistent demand for a 'philosophy of Life' which requires no submission of the hard-earned critical faculty in man. To such minds, the *Bhagavadgita* brings a message of hope and assurance. In fact, its message is fully significant precisely because it offers such a philosophy of life.

In considering the message of the *Gita* our attention is irresistibly drawn to the personality of Sri Krishna, its teacher and inspirer. Among the galaxy of thinkers and leaders which India has produced in the past, to whose invaluable contributions Indian culture owes its distinctive character and uniqueness, the personality of Sri Krishna stands supreme. Hence it is that the Hindus look upon him as a full incarnation of the Supreme Being. This is the greatest honour that can be rendered to any individual who stands head and shoulders above common humanity. Indian genius understood this, it exalted the greatest of its spiritual and cultural leaders to the position of incarnation of God. They form the vanguard of the nations' progress, creating epochs and moulding the national mind. Such a one was Sri Krishna.

In the great drama of the epic of the *Mahabharata*, the figure of Sri Krishna appears often on the stage. Various are the roles that he plays, but none that so much arrests and holds our attention as that of *Parthasarathi*—the Charioteer of Arjuna. This is because therein he appears most human and acts as a friend, philosopher and guide to the grief-stricken Arjuna, and this is his individuality as revealed in the *Mahabharata*. The teachings of the *Gita* get an air of reality from the tragic setting in which the incident occurs. Just before the battle begins, Arjuna the warrior asks Krishna to stop his chariot in the midst of the two contending armies; and from that eminent position Arjuna surveys the field and ascertains with whom he has to fight. Seeing his own teachers and elders, like the revered Drona and the noble Bhishma, arrayed against him, Arjuna's nerve fails him and he becomes despondent. The first chapter of the *Gita* portrays this scene in all its vividness. An excessive emotionalism visible

in all its colours, overpowers Arjuna's judgment and he informs Krishna of his resolution not to fight against and kill his own relations and teachers for the sake of mere worldly glory. He would prefer the life of a mendicant and *fakir* to the enjoyments resulting from such a victory. Other arguments also he advances which appear so convincing to his abnormal mind and shattered judgment that, with a shivering body and stricken heart, he sinks down in the chariot. At this moment of crisis comes the vigorous message of Sri Krishna spoken in a few telling words :

“ In such a crisis, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Arya-like, disgraceful and contrary to the attainment of heaven ? ”

“ Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha; ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies ! ”

( *Gita, Chapter II, Verses 2 and 3* )

These words of Sri Krishna must have acted like an invigorating tonic on the despondent mind of Arjuna. Contrary to all expectations of Arjuna himself, Krishna never sympathises with Arjuna's explanation, though he is in full sympathy with him for the sorrowful plight in which he is placed. Arjuna seems, at least to himself, to be moved by such high virtues like love, kindness, charity and mercy to his enemies. Incidentally, he advances the arguments of non-violence and non-resistance also. All these, strange to note, seem to fall flat on Krishna's mind. Here, Sri Krishna displays an amazing depth of psychological insight and applies, what in modern times is called the psychoanalytic method to bring calmness into the troubled waters of Arjuna's mind. An initial weakness which unbalances the mind, and a train of high sounding rationalisations which prop up the first mistake, obscuring it to such an extent as to be beyond one's power of detection—this in short, is Krishna's reading of Arjuna's mind. The latter's arguments of love, pity, kindness and charity to his enemies betrayed only his sentimental emotionalism, and revealed more the rationalising process that had set in motion these virtues in their virile forms. Virtue, with most people, as it was in the case of Arjuna, is often only a deceptive mask to cover from their vision their own weaknesses. When our lives move on evenly and smoothly, we cannot realise this. But when serious

conflicts set in, when storms and stresses of life force us to re-evaluate our facile conceptions, only then do we detect the shaky bases of most of our virtues. It is only when we unmask this virtue that we rise to true ethical life. But this demands the strength and courage of a *Dhura* or a hero. Hence Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna, "Shake off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O hero."

After administering the tonic contained in the two verses quoted above, which helped to steady Arjuna's mind to a certain extent, Sri Krishna proceeds to remove his doubts and errors by imparting a knowledge of truth which is the greatest saving factor in life. Knowledge is the only permanent cure for all the ills of life, and it is only when we are torn as it were with doubts and conflicts, that we are fit to enquire into and receive the knowledge of truth or philosophy. Since Arjuna is in such a condition, and since he craves Krishna to enlighten him ( Gita, II, 7 ), it is only proper on the part of Krishna to impart to him a philosophy of life, which helps to keep one's mind steady and feet firm in the midst of pre-occupations with life's ceaseless activities. " Tie the knowledge of Truth in the folds of your cloth and do whatever you please" Sri Ramakrishna used to say; Sri Krishna does precisely the same. Life, at every step, raises problems, and it is the business of philosophy to find solutions to them. To this end, philosophy seeks a knowledge of truth which alone can give lasting solution to all the problems of life. Philosophical solutions are not in the nature of promises to be realised when life has ebbed away. Truth cannot be of much consequence to us if it cannot be realized in this life. A solution is no solution when the problem itself ceases to exist. Truth, as the Upanisads say, is to be realized *here and now*.

" For one who has realized it here in this world, there is true life. For one who has not, great shall be the loss. " (*Kena Upanisad*, II, 5)

And truth is simple enough and can enter life silently without elbowing out any of its other contents and transform it imperceptibly. This, and not a bagful of outworn and meaningless creeds and dogmas, is what Sri Krishna offers us when we are at our wit's end. If he had done otherwise, it would have become, in effect, a mockery. As Christ well says : " Or, what man is there of you, whom if his son asks bread, will give him a stone ? "

To go through life steadily and surmount all its obstacles, what is required is a measure of self-confidence. In the words of

Swami Vivekananda, "We must have faith in ourselves first before having faith in God " The knowledge of *Atman* which is our true nature is the basis of all manly endeavour and achievement With this end in view, Sri Krishna shows Arjuna the way to the realisation of his true self, leaving Arjuna to apply that knowledge and faith derived therefrom to the solution of his many problems This is clear from the sixty-third verse of the eighteenth chapter where Sri Krishna says thus .

" Thus has wisdom more profound than all profundities been declared to thee by me, reflecting over it fully, act as thou likest "

That this teaching had its desired effect on Arjuna's mind, is clear from what Arjuna says in the seventy-third verse of the same chapter and from his subsequent conduct Says Arjuna :

" Destroyed is my delusion, and I have gained my memory through Thy grace, O Achyuta I am firm, my doubts are gone I will do thy word "

The two important problems which call for the attention of Sri Krishna are the nature of the self and the problem of conduct. Of these, he proceeds first to a consideration of the former and disposes of the latter afterwards The ego in man is the cause of all errors and the origin of all false values It is that to which we refer all our judgments regarding everything in our experience; and being itself limited and circumscribed, it cannot confer infallibility upon its judgments Hence the errors Hence also doubts, which demand further inquiry Deeper inquiry reveals the totally unreal character of this ego, thus shifting our sense of self-hood to a deeper reality Here we come upon the great Vedantic conception of the *Sakshi* ( witness or ultimate observer ) which no philosopher in the West has arrived at, but towards which Western thought is steadily and unmistakably proceeding through its application of scientific methods to the problems of psychology and epistemology That the ego is unreal, that man's individuality or self-hood does not consist in the ego is the central truth in Buddhism, this is what modern biology and psychology also teach Says H G Wells in *The Science of Life*, that voluminous digest of modern biological knowledge .

" Alone, in the silence of the night and on a score of thoughtful occasions, we have demanded : can this self, so vividly central to my universe, so greedily possessive of the world, ever cease to

be ? Without it surely there is no world at all ! And yet this conscious self dies nightly when we sleep, and we cannot trace the stages by which in its stages it crept to an awareness of its own existence. ”

“ Personality may be only one of Nature’s methods, a convenient provisional delusion of considerable strategic value. ”  
And further :

“ The more intelligent and comprehensive man’s picture of the universe has become, the more intolerable has become his concentration upon the individual life with its inevitable final rejection ”

“ He escapes from his ego by this merger ( identification with and participation in a greater being ), and acquires an impersonal immortality in the association, his identity dissolving into the greater identity. This is the essence of much religious mysticism and it is remarkable how closely the biological analysis of individuality brings us to the mystics The Individual, according to this second line of thought, saves himself by losing himself. But in mystical teaching, he loses himself in the Deity, and in the scientific interpretation of life he forgets himself as Tom, Dick or Harry and discovers himself as Man. The Buddhist treatment of the same necessity is to teach that the individual life is a painful delusion from which men escape by conquest of individual desire. The Western mystic and the Eastern sage find a strong effect of endorsement in modern science and the every day teaching of practical morality; both teach that self must be subordinated, that self is a method and not an end ” ( Ibid, pp. 878 and 879 )

Modern biological and psychological analysis must go deeper in the search for man’s sense of individuality in order to avert the fallacy of total nihilism. Philosophy in India discovered behind the ego, which is part of the ceaseless flow of Nature, the reality of the ultimate observer or Witness whom they called the *Sakshi*. The *Sakshi* is that Timeless being which witnesses all this flow and change in the world of thought and things. The philosophical significance of this discovery has yet to be fully grasped. Yet, all true knowledge, all valid judgments in logic or science imply unmistakably a shifting of the subject from the ego to the *Sakshi*. When Science insists on studying things from the point of view of the objects themselves by eliminating the personal equation, it

is, in effect, emphasising only the *Sakshibhava*. For, the limited and circumscribed vision of the ego gives place to the unlimited and universal vision of the *Sakshi* by the practice of scientific or intellectual detachment. In ordinary life also, when we insist on what is called impartial judgment, what is sought to be achieved is this same ego-elimination. Says Professor J. B. Haldane in his *Possible Worlds* :

“ I notice that when I think logically and scientifically or act morally, my thoughts and actions cease to be characteristic of myself and are those of any intelligent or moral being in the same position. In fact, I am already identifying my mind with an absolute or unconditioned mind.

“ Only in so far as I do this can I see any probability of my survival, and the more I do so the less I am interested in my private affairs and the less desire do I feel for personal immortality.”

The two important characteristics of the *Sakshi* are detachment and universality. It marks the highest point of perfection in the process of depersonalisation. Thus it is the fulfilment of the scientific attitude and outlook. That it is the fulfilment and aim of ethical, including religious discipline also will be shown in the sequel.

When Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that the true Self of man is unborn, immortal and eternal he is referring to this *Sakshi*. ( Vide Gita II -16, XIII - 22, XV -10 and XVIII -17 )

The Gita conceives Reality as that which never changes. The ego being subject to change is unreal, so also are all its objects. Hence Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to transcend the dualities of experience like heat and cold, pain and pleasure and identify himself with the permanent and unchanging Being, the *Sakshi*.

The *Sakshi* being the ultimate Subject or Observer the difficulty of comprehending it truly is well expressed by Sri Krishna thus :

“ Some look upon the Self as marvellous; others look upon It as wonderful, others again speak of It as a wonder. And still others though hearing do not understand It at all ” ( Gita III-29 )

Thus does Sri Krishna impart to Arjuna a knowledge of the philosophy of the True Self ( *Samkhya Yoga* ) Next he proceeds to draw the ethical implications of his metaphysics.



Sri Krishna recognised long ago that a rational ethics must be based on the highest metaphysics. Mankind has been searching for a sanction for ethical discipline. Prophets and philosophers have offered various theories regarding ethical life. All religions and philosophies unanimously teach that unselfishness is the highest virtue for all. But whereas religions seek its explanation in the words of an inspired prophet or a revealed scripture, philosophers like Kant find it in the Categorical Imperative. Both these are unsatisfactory. Ethics could get no sanction from Kant's Pure Reason and its Metaphysics. He fell back upon intuition and Practical Reason and discovered the Categorical Imperative as the basis of all ethical endeavour. But the demand for a rational ethics is still there and Kant's Categorical Imperative is no better, if not worse in its actual application than ethics based on Revelation. In the *Vedanta* and the *Gita* we have metaphysics which explains the rational of all ethics and morality.

Ethics has to solve the conflicts between the rival demands of self and society, selfishness and altruism. When ethics teaches the suppression of self or ego as the essence of moral life, it asks us merely to transcend the unreal and find our being in the Real. "Why should I be unselfish?" asks the rationalist of to-day, expecting a rational answer. Because, "The self is a fever, the self is a delusion" as Lord Buddha says. And since realisation of Truth requires the attainment of the detached view-point of the *Sakshi*, ethical discipline must be combined with scientific and intellectual discipline for its dullest realisation. To the discipline of the intellect which science insists on in its pursuit of Truth, must be added a discipline of the whole life, covering every moment of one's existence. This is *Yoga* as understood in *Vedanta* and *Buddhism*. Life is a continuous struggle characterised by ceaseless activity. How to order life and its activities so that it may yield its fruit in the shape of the knowledge of Truth—is the great problem and the nameless quest for all mankind. How to make work conducive to individual and social welfare? To this perennial problem Sri Krishna gives a solution which is at once original and unique in the history of thought—I refer to the *Gita's* teaching of *Karma Yoga*.

Before enquiry, untutored man takes his ego or self as real, and all actions and events are judged from that standpoint. At



this stage man works with various motives and one of such motives at the time of Sri Krishna was the attainment of heaven which had attained the status of a creed in the Vedic period. But philosophic enquiry in the Upanisads destroyed the basis of this doctrine by showing the impermanence and unreality of the ego. The Upanisads and the Buddha taught the unreality of all desire-ridden existence earthly or heavenly. Sri Krishna and the Buddha showed that sacrifices and rituals are not the essence of an ethical life. Moral evolution is to be measured not by outward transference to higher planes of existence but by an inward penetration by the reduction of the ego. The *Gita* through its teaching of *Karma Yoga* helped to transfer the guidance of life from theology to philosophy.

“The wisdom of self-realisation (*Samkhya*) has been declared unto thee. Hearken thou now to the wisdom of ethical action (*Yoga*), endowed with which, O Arjuna, thou shalt break through the bonds of action

“In this (*Yoga*), there is no waste of unfinished attempts, nor is there production of contrary results. Even a little of this *Dharma* saves one from great fear.” (*Gita* II, 39 and 40).

We have already seen in a previous paragraph that the two characteristics of the true Self or *Sakshi* are (1) its detachment and (2) its freedom from limited or circumscribed vision. We have also seen how scientific enquiry helps in a measure to attain this exalted view-point. We shall now proceed to enquire how ethical endeavour also finds its meaning and completion in this consummation. A converging life-endeavour towards the conquest of the false self or ego is the *sine qua non* for the realisation of one's True Self or being.

To this end, the *Gita* gives a two-fold advice. Firstly, all works, whether pleasant or unpleasant, should be performed in the sense of duty. What does this imply? That work by itself is neither high nor low, but the preferences of the ego evaluate all work according to its whims. It is at this stage that man seeks for a comfortable life and a comfortable religion. The sense of duty teaches us to disregard the false values which the ego has attached to life and work. This negation of the ego and its values is also the transcendence of the ego itself. This helps us to realise the second characteristic of the *Sakshi*, namely, freedom from limited vision, or, what amounts to the same thing, getting univer-

salinity of outlook. Secondly, by not caring for the fruit of our actions or by being unattached to them, we are asked to realise the first characteristic of the *sakshi*, namely, detachment. The only condemnation the *Gita* makes of those who work with various selfish motives is that they are men of small understanding, *kripanah phala-hetavah*, and defines *Karma Yoga* as dexterity in action—*yogah karmasu kaushalam*. It extols this attitude in these words :

“ The wise possessed of this evenness of mind, abandoning the fruits of their actions, freed forever from the fetters of life, attain that state which is beyond all evil. ” ( *Gita* II, 51 ).

Thus duty is the first stage in ethical and spiritual discipline. There is still a higher phase of life taught in the *Gita*, which has witnesses among the sages and saints of every religion, but which does not find any serious treatment in any system outside Indian thought. Duty is the hard school where man learns to crucify his ego. This phase is characterised by ceaseless struggle and tension. But when one succeeds in shifting the centre from the ego to the *Sakshi*, duty fulfils itself, and the individual works from the highest stand-point. The urge to break all bondages and fly into the free air of freedom compels one to criticise and evaluate, at a higher stage, the concept of duty itself. Duty is certainly high as compared with the plane of passions and desires. The moral man transcends the vegetative man. But there is an element of compulsion in it. We may call it inner compulsion ( Categorical Imperative ), or external compulsion ( Scriptural injunctions and prohibitions ), but compulsion it is. Hence, it must be transcended. The call of Freedom is insistent, all bonds must be broken. The man of duty is at best a disciplined slave. Hence the *Gita* teaches man to rise above even this duty and work as a free being. Loving another because of the mandate of scripture or teacher is good; doing so as a result of compelling prompting from within is better. But it is best when love becomes a spontaneous expression of one's whole being. In the first and second stages, there is a possibility of error and a dilution of selfishness. But with the transcendence of the ego and elimination of self-love, life and love assume an eternal and pure aspect. Life becomes natural and love becomes spontaneous. Such an one can no more stop loving than a rose can stop sending out its sweet smell. For, here, we are no more

on the plane of commands or law, but on the plane of Nature or Expression. The *Gita* devotes many passages to describe this stage beyond duty—the plane on which Buddha and Christ lived ( Vide, *Gita* II, 71, III, 17; IV, 18; VI, 18; XII, 13, 14, 18 and 19 )

When one attains the *sakshi* consciousness, he finds life in an entirely new perspective. All the false values which the ego had attached to life and its functions get destroyed, and they reveal themselves in their true forms. Such a life is the acme of ethical perfection. Man leaves far behind him all the struggles and joys, hates, competitions and sorrows, which is life to every one of us, and learns to view life as a grand harmony—everything in tune with everything else and with himself. Then words of love alone fall from his lips, all his thoughts make for the good of the world, and all his actions seek the welfare of mankind as a whole. They are, in the words of the *Gita*, *sarvabhutahite ratah* ( ever interested in the good of all beings ) and their actions and thoughts have always only one reference, *lokasangrahartham* ( the welfare of mankind ) Truly has it been said by Jesus that such men are the salt of the earth

In this philosophy and in this ethical teaching we have the meaning and explanation of all life's activities. Here I must mention one important feature of the *Gita* teaching—its synthetic note. Under the hegemony of his comprehensive philosophy of life, Sri Krishna synthesises all the aspects of spiritual life—aspects broadly known in India as the paths of work, devotion, meditation and knowledge—and whatever other paths there be, by emphasising the essential nature and common feature of all of these. Whether we are asked to surrender ourselves to God, or work without any attachment, whether we are asked to calm the mind or analyse our thoughts, what we in essence do and achieve is the elimination of the ego which is the mask which truth wears in every one of us. Whatever religious practices we do, whatever phase of life we may live, if once we shift our centre of individuality to the *Sakshi*, we go beyond all the dualities and struggles of life, and attain universality of outlook and breadth of heart. Not only that, all measure of large-heartedness and breadth of outlook we see in the world bespeak only of this attainment in various degrees.

We have here, in broad outline, the *Gita* teaching and its

implications. One thing strikes us, and that is its non-sectarian and non-creedal character. In whatever position of life we may be, to whatever creed or religion we may belong, the *Gita* teaching is unlimited in its scope. It has only one message—the message of strength—a message that raises man to higher and higher levels of self-expression. It never seeks to make a Jew a Gentile, a Christian or a Muslim, a Hindu, a Westerner, an Easterner, or vice versa. It appeals to every man and woman to apply its teachings to his or her circumstances and march towards the citadel of Truth, with only one warning, that is, not to rest content on the way. There is no crying for quarter in the search for truth.

Today the world as a whole is passing through a supreme crisis in all its history. The old world with its thoughts, opinions and institutions is in a state of rapid dissolution; none can yet see clearly the shape of things to come. Deeply imbedded in the modern consciousness is a desire for the creation of a stable civilization. Thinkers in the East and the West give expression to this urge when they speak of the future world order. If the future is to witness the emergence of a world civilization, the collective wisdom of mankind has to be utilised for its realisation. The greatest contribution shall come not from sects and creeds or parties and leaders but from the spiritual benefactors of humanity like Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Mohommed. The present world context with its gushing passions and high aspirations somewhat resembles the conditions that obtained in India in the age of the *Mahabharata* war when the message of the *Gita* was delivered. In these days of conflict, struggle and confusion, we can have no better guide to show us the path to freedom and peace than the message of the rational, universal and comprehensive spirituality which Krishna taught in his *Gita* over 2,000 years ago. It is God's message to man—eternal, ancient and ageless. Momentous problems are there before us which stagger the wisdom of the earth's bravest and best. Let us hope and pray that the new interest that is evident in many quarters in the *Song Celestial*, as Edwin Arnold called the *Gita*, may be productive of real and lasting benefit to humanity at large.

## THE SYNTHETIC CHARACTER OF THE GITA TEACHINGS

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D. D. Wadekar

### I. Bhagwad-gita—A Double Synthesis

The Bhagwadgita is the most representative synthesis of Indian philosophic thought, as it combines within itself most of the strands of the philosophic thought of ancient India. It is certainly a text in the broad Vedic tradition, and yet it makes room within its doctrine of life for the workable elements in the non-Vedic 'heresies' Charvaka, the Jaina and the Buddha. When Lord Sri Krishna declares . "In beings I am the passion ( Kama ) which is not contrary to law ", he is accommodating Charvaka. And the Gita lays emphasis on Ahimsa ( non-violence ) and its doctrine of *Lokasangraha* ( work in the service of the masses ) similarly absorbs the operative parts of Jaina and the Buddhist doctrines. From among the philosophic trends in the Vedic tradition, though the Gita does not adopt the Nyaya-Vaisheshika atomism, it still absorbs it in its own way, its broad conceptions of *Prakriti* and *Purusa* and the spiritual pathway, have been borrowed and reinterpreted by the Gita to fit in within its own framework. And finally, the Gita has also accepted the Mimamsa conception of Yajna, which it has transmuted and spiritualised into the unique doctrine of selfless work.

The Gita, however, is synthetic in its philosophic teachings also in *another* sense, i e in the Hegelian sense, in that, whereas, broadly speaking, in the history of philosophic speculation in India, the Vedic period represents a *thesis* and the *Upanisadic* period represents an *antithesis*, the Gita presents a *synthesis*.

of the two. It is this idea which has been worked out in my book, 'Bhagwad-Gita' A fresh Study (1928, Oriental Book Agency, Poona, 2) : and, I propose to present, in Note, a brief statement, if somewhat dogmatic, of the nature of this Gita synthesis for the consideration of the readers. I shall neither quote nor argue, though I have done both in that book.

Tilak has rightly maintained that the Gita teachings must be interpreted only in their legitimate context or *setting*, and that his setting was, broadly, a socio-political one in which the main problem of Sri Krishna was to persuade Arjuna to do his duty of waging war as indicated by his concrete situation, which Arjuna was, ultimately, persuaded to do and did. My own plan regarding this contextual argument of Tilak is that in interpreting the *philosophical* import of the Gita, its *philosophical* context and background, as distinguished from the socio-political, must also be taken into consideration. The fact about the Gita is that it is a representative philosophical text which broadly represents the *third*, viz. the epic, period of Indian philosophic development, which emerged against the background of the *first* viz. the Vedic and the *Second* viz. the Upanisadic, periods of development, and can only be properly interpreted as such and in their context and against their background.

If this is granted, it is necessary to cast a glance at these historico-philosophical antecedents of the Gita viz. (1) the Vedas and (2) the Upanisads and their philosophical teaching which we shall do well to divide into two sections; (a) metaphysical and (b) ethical. And if we follow this plan, my plea is that the Gita, on both the sides of its philosophic teachings, metaphysical and ethical, represents a synthesis of the metaphysical and ethical teachings of the Vedas and the Upanisads. Let us see.

## II Teaching of the Vedas—A Thesis :

(a) **Metaphysics** : In the Vedas, especially the Rigveda, the poets have been usually occupied with the various cosmic deities, ( e. g. Indra, Varuna and others ) praying to them and seeking to propitiate them and asking for the gifts of life, property and prosperity from them. This activity of those seers embodies, or at least logically implies, a pretty definite view of the world, which was that the world was governed by a number of principles, which they personified and divinised, and which they thought it

necessary to propitiate in their own interest. This was their *metaphysics* which may be called *Theological pluralism*.

(b) **Ethics** : This *metaphysical* view of the world was the natural basis of their moral life, which implied their *ethical* theory. If the world was governed by the divine principles or deities who were the ultimate controlling agencies behind nature, it evidently follows that the human beings' role is to submit themselves to them and seek their pleasure and kindness, and to secure, from them the boons of life. The desire to please and propitiate the deities found embodiment in the institution of *Yajna* with its elaborate ritual or making offerings to these deities such as wine, ghee, bull, horse, etc. and his desire to have the boons, finds expression in their prayers for the gifts of long life, beautiful wives, brave sons, etc. The end of life was to secure the god's pleasure and find their own through it. This was their ethics which may be termed practical *Hedonism*.

So the substance of the Vedic philosophy was a Theological Pluralism in metaphysics coupled with a practical Hedonism in ethics and it will be seen that these two elements in it form a coherent whole.

Now let us proceed to the Upanisads.

### III Teachings of the Upanisads—An Antithesis :

(a) **Metaphysics**: The Upanisads constitute, broadly speaking, a sharp reaction against the more or less common sense speculations of the Vedas. The Vedic conception of gods and goddesses now pales into the background; and the necessity is felt to think deeper and go beyond the superficial theological pluralism to the one lone reality behind them, behind the universe and ourselves, the Brahman or the Atman or the Absolute,—the one without a second, which alone is, though men call it many, the ultimate spiritual substratum at the basis of this big illusory world of many and diverse objects and ourselves. This in the broad Upanisadic metaphysics, which can be termed the absolute monism or singularism of the Upanisads.

(b) **Ethics** : The Upanisadic Ethics also makes a sharp contrast against the Vedic Ethics and directly follows from the Upanisadic metaphysics. If the Atman or the Brahman is the sole and the exclusive reality underlying ourselves or this universe, the one categorical duty of man is to try to know and to realise



the real nature of this Reality in his actual concrete experience. It is this Atman or the self which is the source of all *real* peace and happiness, the ultimate value, everything else deriving its value only in relation to this self. It is this self that the Upanisads ask us to see, to hear, to meditate. To renounce this illusory world for the quest of this self is the highest good prescribed by them. This is the Upanisadic ethics and it may be termed Philosophical Asceticism.

So the substance of the Upanisadic philosophy was a Metaphysical Singularism coupled with the consequence. Philosophical Asceticism, the two elements as cohering together as a consistent whole.

#### IV Teaching of the Gita—A Synthesis :

Now what about the teachings of the Gita, metaphysical and ethical ! My suggestion is that both Gita metaphysics and Gita ethics represent a synthesis. A Hegelian synthesis, as indicated before—of the thesis and antithesis of Vedic and Upanisadic ethics, and have a relation of mutual coherence between themselves, as in the case of metaphysics and ethics of two earlier stages. Let me expatiate on this statement

(a) **Metaphysics** : The Gita stands neither for the Vedic Pluralism nor the Upanisadic Singularism, neither for the many nor for the one. It stands for the Many which are the One and for the One which appears as the many. Though the Gita distinguishes between the *Apara Prakriti* and the *Para Prakriti*, between nature and spirit, thus countenancing, though partly, the Samkhya dualism of *Prakriti* and *Purusa* it still transcends that distinction by declaring that the two together constitute God or the ultimate reality. The one Lord it is who presides after the evolution of this variegated world, so the Gita holds, and the Gita also assures us that, throughout the universe, wherever there is anything by way of power, glory or splendour, that only is the portion of His energy. From the one stem the many; and in the many there is but the One—This is the Gita's metaphysical synthesis of the many and one of the Vedas and the Upanisads respectively.

(b) **Ethics** : The Gita stands neither for the Vedic Hedonism nor for the Upanisadic Asceticism, neither for pleasure nor for renunciation. It stands for an ethics of the



*complete* personality The Vedas taught an ethics of pure feeling (Hedonism), and the Upanisads taught an ethics based on pure knowledge (Asceticism). The Gita provides a rounded system of ethics which bases itself not only on these elements of *feeling* and *knowledge* in human nature, but also on the third, element in it, the *activity*. Since God is present in all things including the human self, all the sides or the aspects of that self's nature must find fulfilment or satisfaction, according to their nature and value, in the ultimate ethical ideal. This ideal therefore, is, as T. H. Green used to say, 'an abiding satisfaction of an abiding self'. This is the *Brahmi Sthiti* described by the Gita. Radhakrishnan describes the ethical ideal of the Gita as the 'Union with the Highest through Logic, Love and Life', or as the 'Harmonious efficiency of the several sides of our life by which truth is attained, beauty created and conduct perfected'. It is, in essence, the same ideal which Plato named as Justice—which according to him, simply meant the harmonious working of all the three aspects of the individual's mental life (or that of the three corresponding classes of the society). In this ideal the entire person or self finds its consummation and fulfilment for all its elements, sides or aspects. Yet, as persons differ in their individual psychical make-up, in the nature and strength of the elements in that make-up, their individual ethical paths in the concrete, may have to undergo correspondingly, relevant variations in their emphasis on this or that element in that make-up; thus, some may better *know* God, others better *love* Him, others still better *serve* Him. Hence arise the three Yogas of the Gita: the *Jnana Yoga* (the path of knowledge), the *Bhakti Yoga* (the path of love), and the *Karma Yoga* (the path of action). And the Gita leaves individuals free to follow the Yoga best suited to their nature and needs. This is the ethical synthesis of the Gita and represents the high watermark of Indian philosophical speculation on human life and its problems.

It will, thus, be realised that the metaphysics of the Gita and the Ethics of the Gita constitute a Hegelian synthesis of the Vedic and Upanisadic metaphysics and ethics, and also make, between themselves, a coherent whole of a single consistent philosophic doctrine.

## METHOD OF INTERPRETING THE GITA

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Dr. P. M. Modi

While interpreting the Gita, I had many occasions to add notes to explain why certain words and certain verses had to be interpreted in a particular way and not in a different way. I thought of collecting and classifying such notes and remarks and the results are recorded in this Paper.

1. The word Gita is a feminine form and it is the same word as in 'Shrimadbhagavadgitasu upanisatsu'. So 'Gitah upanisadah'—'Upanisads sung by the Lord' is the complete expression. The word *upanisad* is here the same word as in यदेव विद्यया करोति श्रद्धयोपनिषदा तदेव वीर्यवत्तरम् (छादोग्य) The Gita is concerned with 'action' (Karman) and the ways of doing actions disinterestedly. These ways or arguments leading to the performance of actions without selfish interest are called *upanisads* in the 'itishri'. In यदेव उपनिषदा करोति तदेव वीर्यवत्तरम् the word *upanisad* means "a key or a secret explanation of doing an action so that the action gives a better result (viryaavattaram) than the action done without knowing or applying such an Upanisad. The *itishri* of the Gita means that the Gita is a collection of a number of Upanisads or keys of doing actions and that these Upanisads have been sung (Gitah) by the Lord. So, it is not right to translate the word Gita as a song Bhagavadgita (Lord's Song, Song Divine) It seems that the *itishri* of the Adhyayas of the Gita is older than the inclusion of this already very ancient work consisting of Upanisads sung by the Lord, in the Mahabharata as a part of the Bhismaparvan. This part is called Gitaparvan, but really

it should have been called Shrimadbhagavadgitopanisatparvan because then only the subject-matter of the work in question would be clearly stated in the title of this part. The use of the vague name "Gitaparvan" shows that the importance of the word "Gita" as an adjective to the word "Upanisads" was already forgotten when the Bhismaparvan came to be a Chapter in the MBH. The use of words like Anugita, Pandavagita etc. shows the same

2. The word Yoga in Yogashastra in the Itishri mean Samatva as in सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्व योग उच्यते (2 48). The use of words like 'uchyate' 'ukta' (avyaktaksara ityuktah) 'ahuh', 'udahritaani', prathitah), etc. show that the words qualified by them are "Conventional" or Rudha words and should not be explained etymologically as in युज्यतेऽनेन ज्ञानेन जीवः ब्रह्मणा इतियोगः ज्ञानम्। "When yoga is explained by 'yogah karmasu kaushalam', 'yoga' means cleverness of preserving the Equanimity or Equality of the Mind while doing one's actions. Also in tam 'vidyaddukhsamyogaviviyogam yoga-samjnitam' the word *yoga* means the *samatva* of the mind which is 'separation (vivyoga) of the mind from union (samyoga) with sorrow'. And, here also 'yoga' is called a samjna a fact which shows that yoga in the Gita is a conventional term. We shall again have to come to the problem of the use of this word "yoga", but one fact should be noted here. In the Gita there are two aspects of the Yoga. The Gita says, "Start doing your actions without self-interest, you will reach a stage, when you shall do all your actions *automatically without the expectation of any selfish result*; this is the second or higher stage of doing actions without being tainted by the result of actions". And the Gita allows a man who has reached this second stage to choose either Renunciation or Yoga, i e., continuation of doing actions without selfish motive. Here the first stage of Yoga should be called Sadhanayoga, and the second should be called Phalayoga which is the Yoga practised by Janaka. It is in this latter sense that the Gita is called Yogashastra "the Scripture of Yoga", so, it is the Scripture of Phalayoga not Sadhanayoga. Also, when names like Karmayoga (3rd Adh), Bhaktiyoga (12th Adh) are applied to an Adhyaya, the word योग in Karmayoga, Phalayoga etc means the Phalayogas

3. The titles Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga etc. of the Adhyayas always refer to some verses in the very Adhyaya bearing the respective title. In the case of most of these titles, e. g. विभूतियोग, विश्वरूपदर्शनयोग गुणत्रयविभागयोग, दैवासुरसपट्टविभागयोग this reference to certain verses of the Adhyaya itself is quite clear. Thus, each Adhyaya gives one particular self-complete Yoga or in other words, one aspect of the Yoga, for a seeker who may find that particular Yoga suitable to himself to get peace ( *shanti* ) in his life.

The names of the Adhyayas are found in some verses of the Gita itself and we are told that these Yogas, Samkhyayoga ( Adh. II ), Karmayoga ( Adh. III ), etc. are meant for different types of persons. Thus, we have

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।  
 अन्ये साख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेण चापरे ॥  
 अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।  
 तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्यु श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥

गीता. १३-२४, २५

Here सांख्ययोगेन and कर्मयोगेण refer to the aspects of the Yoga taught respectively in Adh. II and III and अन्ये (अन्ये साख्येन योगेन) and अपरे (कर्मयोगेण चापरे) clearly show that the followers of these two aspects of the Yoga are different types of persons. The word 'dhyanaena' would refer probably to the aspect of the Yoga in Adhyaya 6 and अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते to one of the Bhakti aspects of Yoga like that in Adh. XII, XV, or to the श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोग of Adh. XVII, and केचिद् and अन्ये तु show that the followers of these two forms of the Yoga are also different classes of Yogins. The result of each Yoga by itself is the same, viz. seeing Atman in one's self by the particular Yogin. So, all these (at least the four mentioned here) are *parallel* Yogas. They are not stages on one and the same path. Similarly, when some four options are given to Arjuna in Gita XII. 8-11 where the Bhaktiyoga of that very Adh. XII, the Abhyasayoga probably Adh. VI, the Bhagavatkarmayoga or Bhagavadyoga of Adh. XI and Karmayoga probably of Adh. III, are meant and where each time the result is said to be the same, we find that four Yo<sub>5</sub>

probably those of Adhyayas XII, VI, XI and III are compared and each preceding one is said to be better than each succeeding one because the former is more difficult than the latter. In the case of the last Yoga *karmaphalatyaga* and *tyagatshantivanantaram* ) ( XII. 12. ) we are told that the same goal as that of the earlier three Yogas, viz , Peace, is achieved immediately from the Tyaga or Karmayoga. Here, though the Gita arranges these four Yogas in the order of each preceding one being more difficult than each succeeding one, the arrangement of the order does not imply or mean that each preceding Yoga gives a superior result (निवसिष्यसि मय्येव १२-८, सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि १२-१०, त्यागाच्छान्तिरन्तरम्) in XII. 12

I suggest that in the days of the Gita there were many Yogas and many Samkhyas . The Samkhya in Gita II. 39 is different from the Samkhya in XVIII. 13-17, and at least there are 18 Yogas as in the 18 Adhyayas of the Gita. Hence we have यत्साख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानम् तद्योगैरपि गम्यते in V. 5.

Because the Yogas are many, we have such expressions as अपरे योगिनः in IV. 25 दैवमेवापरे यज्ञ योगिनः पर्युपासते also सर्वेषां योगिनाम् in VI . 47 ( योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना । श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ) In IV. 30 we have सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषा. where सर्वे means सर्वेऽपि एते योगिनः ।

**Thus the different types of Yogas as named in the 'itishri's of the 18 Adhyayas were meant for different types of Yogins.**

4. The expression श्री कृष्णार्जुनसवाद in the 'itishri's of the different Adhyayas should be carefully studied In the Gita we find श्री भगवानुवाच instead of श्रीकृष्णउवाच and Arjuna addresses Sri Krishna as Achyuta in I 21 which is the very first sentence spoken by Arjuna in the Gita From the 4th Adhyaya onwards there are many Adhyayas where Sri Krishna or rather Sri Bhagawan starts His speech without a question being asked by Arjuna and there are several Adhyayas ( XV, XVI ) where Sri Bhagavan is the only speaker throughout and we have to suppose that Arjuna is standing near Him quietly hearing him So the name श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताः उपनिषदः is more correct than the name श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसवाद The author of the original work is anxious to give us Upanisads sung by the Lord rather than a Dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna

5. The use of the word "Yoga" in the text itself of the Gita should be carefully noticed. From the text of the Gita it is clear that the proper and original word is "Yoga" while "karmayoga" etc. are used to express different aspects of the Yoga, e. g. the word कर्मयोग would mean समत्व through action. Thus, we have the simple word योग in एषा तेऽभिहिता साख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमा शृणु । II. 39, योगस्थ. कुरु कर्माणि and समत्व योग उच्यते। II 48, योग कर्मसु कौशलम् II 50, तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि 11 53, इम विवस्वते योग प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् IV 1, स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परतप IV 2. also in IV. 3 स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योग प्रोक्तः पुरातनः। IV.41 योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणिम्, IV 42. योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ।

It is योग which is opposed to कर्मणा सन्यास in the Gita e. g in V. 1 ( सन्यासं कर्मणा कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शसति ) . The word कर्मयोग occurring just in V 2, would lead one to think that योग in V. 1 and कर्मयोग in V 2 are synonyms. But V 2 would refer to कर्मयोग previously explained by the Lord, e g. in Adh. III, or we can say that V. 1 mentions कर्मणा सन्यास and कर्मणा योगः and the same two are mentioned in V.2, because in V. 4-5 the word "योग" occurs and in V. 6 there is a contrast between सन्यास and योग (सन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्नुमयोगतः । योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति VI-6. ). Also VI 1 says य सन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योग त विद्धि पाण्डव ।

6. The Central Teaching of the Gita and Karman, Jnana and Bhakti in the Gita.

It will be seen from the above that in my opinion the Gita teaches "yoga" in the sense of equality of mind in the success or failure of one's undertaking (samatvam II. 48), and that each Adhyaya gives one aspect of that Yoga In my opinion, all other teachings in the Gita are made subsidiary to this teaching. Thus Karman, Jnana, Bhakti, Dhyana, and various other means such as the uttering of OM TAT SAT, are all means subsidiary to the Teaching of what I have suggested to call Phalayoga, called simply in the 'itishri' the compound words, Arjunavisada-yoga, Samkhyayoga, Karmayoya etc. being only aspects of the Yoga

Here I may note that according to the Acharyas the Central Teaching is Moksa, According to Sri Shankara Karman and Bhakti are subsidiary to Jnana which alone brings Moksa According to modern scholars the author of the Gita teaches one philosophical system by collecting what he thought to be the best from all the

Darshanas, and therein, the Western scholars say that this effort of the author is a failure because there are repetitions and contradictions in the Gita. According to Tilak the Gita teaches Karmayoga and wherever in the Gita the word Yoga occurs it means Karmayoga.

I may point out that even where the Gita mentions Moksa, achieved through Jnana, etc., the Mukta is advised in the Gita to follow Yoga rather than Samnyasa.

Regarding the philosophical teaching of the Gita my view is that there are many philosophical doctrines in the Gita. Thus, in the 7th Adh the creation takes place from two Prakritis and Sri Krishna; in the 9th Adh it takes place from only one Prakriti and Sri Krishna; in the 10th Adh only from a portion of Sri Krishna (एकांश). Gita XIV. Sri Krishna says that 'He teaches that Jnana which is the best of all Jnanas! It should be added that each of these Jnanas is *subsidiary* to the aspect of Yoga of the respective Adhyaya, as is expressed in its title.

Regarding Tilak's view, we have already said that 'Karmayoga' is the name of only the third Adhyaya and that it means '*samatva through action*'. According to Tilak the Gita teaches ज्ञानमूलक भक्तिप्रधान कर्मयोग but the Gita really gives three different Yogas Jnanayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga and many other Yogas each in a separate Adhyaya.

7 Combinations of Karman, Jnana, Bhakti, Dhyana etc. in the Gita

The Acharyas and modern scholars have their own views as regards the *Samuccaya* of these means. But, in my opinion an analysis of the statements in the Gita on this point would show that each of these may even *singly* lead to the stage of "freedom from compulsion to do one's duties" (Naiskarmya-siddhi) or sometimes *two or more* of them may be combined in the achievement of the same and when they combine there is no fixed order in which they follow one another. It all depends upon the requirement of a seeker, and, according to the Gita, the Yogas are meant for different types of seekers.

8. Varieties of Jnanas, Karmans, forms of Bhakti, Dhyana, and other helps : Just as there are many theories of creation, there are also many views on the nature of Moksa called भगवत्साधर्म्य, ब्रह्मनिर्वाण, शान्ति, परमपदप्राप्ति etc. Also, there are diffe-



rent Karmans including those done for Yajnas which help different seekers And, it seems that the Gita teaches different forms of Bhakti also. Besides these the Gita teaches a number of other means.

### 9 Distribution of the subject matter in the Adhyayas of the Gita

According to Sri Shankar some Vibhūṭis are given in the 7th Adh, others in the 10th Adh and a few more in the 15th Adh. This one example gives an idea of the interrelation of the Adhyayas and the distribution of the subject matter in the Gita according to Acharyas and modern interpreters. Tilak has tried to show that some particular point or points not very clear in a preceding Adh are given in an immediately following one Madhusudana has the theory of काण्डत्रयी or three षट्क, कर्मषट्क, भक्तिषट्क and ज्ञानषट्क in the Gita. But really each Adhyaya gives an independent aspect of the Yoga, and I believe I have given sufficient arguments already.

### 10. Repetitions and contradictions in the Gita.

The repetitions, e g on the point of giving up desire for reward of actions, the four pictures of a perfect Man (स्थितप्रज्ञ, ध्यानी, भक्त, त्रिगुणातीत) etc, are there because each Adhyaya is meant to be a self-complete unit. The contradictions, e. g, the Personal conception and the Impersonal one of the Supreme Being, the praise of Jnana and again that of Karman, etc are meant for different types of Yogins, so they are not real contradictions

11. We should likewise consider the interrelation of the verses within an Adhyaya Thus, we would find, e. g, in the case of the verses of Adh. XIII, that we have three independent pairs, giving three independent aspects of Yoga, viz. क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ-विभागयोग, ज्ञानज्ञेयविभागयोग and प्रकृतिपुरुषविभागयोग In Adh. XVIII we find what we can call by the names of several योगs, सन्यासत्यागविभागयोग, कृतान्तसाख्ययोग etc In Adh. VIII we have only अक्षरब्रह्मयोग but while explaining that योग it is compared and contrasted with अधियज्ञकृष्णयोग and अधिदैवतपुरुषयोग, two योगs which the योगिन्s do not return to this earth unlike the अक्षरब्रह्मविद्योगिन्s who return here if they leave their body during धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्ण षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम्. These three examples show



the necessity of studying the relation between two consecutive verses within an Adhyaya. In the 18th Adh. we have several independent means of Yoga, mentioned one after the other.

The problem of the Central Teaching of the Gita is very important, because there have been innumerable interpretations of the Gita, which are mutually different and often mutually contradictory. This problem can be partly solved if once the method of interpreting the Gita is fixed. I have tried to do here a part of this difficult task and yet much remains to be done

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## DIVINE APPROACH TO THE GITA

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**Pandurangshastri Athavale**

### **Popularity With The Masses**

A common man regards the Bhagwadgita, as a religious classic rather than a philosophical treatise. For him it is a sacred book, it is a popular divine poem. He believes in the Bhagawadgita as he believes in various other books of scriptures. He feels its study brings merit, happiness and prosperity. The greatness of the Bhagwadgita is a matter of faith for him. He has not dived deep into the Bhagwadgita to seek a solution for his problems of life or for the problems of his society. The age-long popularity of the Gita with the masses is because of its pleasant and enchanting consolation it offers to the people in the language which they want, and which appeals to their hearts amidst the sea of bewilderment. Utterances of the Gita are the utterances of a Saviour, who had been incarnated in a human form, to redeem the depressed and down-trodden mankind from its lot of pain and sufferings, sins and vices. The Lord has in clear and unequivocal terms declared that :

“ Even if the most sinful person worships Me with undivided attention he too should be regarded as ‘righteous’ for he has rightly resolved !

“ My devotee shall never perish ! ”

“ I carry the responsibility for security and prosperity of my devotees.”

“ None who works for righteousness ever comes to grief or an evil end.”

“When righteousness wanes and when wickedness increases, I arise from age to age and for the *salvation* of the good and destruction of the evil, and to establish righteousness I take Avatara ! ”

“Give up all Dharmas, take refuge in me alone and I will liberate thee from all the sins.”

## 2. Righteous Thinkers

The Gita unfolds in noble language, a philosophical system which has remained to this day acceptable to all great thinkers of the world, the superior scholars of the world. Those who struggle in life to solve the problems of good and evil, right and wrong, truth and untruth find the Bhagwadgita a work of imperishable significance. Unto them the book gives profound insights that are valid for all times and for all religious life in a very plain and lucid manner. Those who struggle in life have always found a ray of light to make them smile in their days of deep disappointment and overwhelming tragedies. They feel that the book gives utterances to the aspirations of the pilgrims of all sects, who seek to tread the inner way to the city of God. They have found comfort in this great book which sets forth in precise and penetrating words, the essential principles of practical ethics which are not tinged with unscientific dogmas or arbitrary fancies. They have realised that one cannot perceive the meaning of right and truthful life by debates and discussions, but by finding out the Deed (Karma) demanded of us. The Gita solves the problem by pointing out the pitfalls in our path and the way to overcome and to avoid them. The Bhagwadgita, they emphasize, has a message of action based on philosophy of life. The Bhagwadgita, they say, is not a book of Hindu scripture, but is a book of universal religion based on the dignity of thought and action. Aldous Huxley has aptly remarked, “the Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the perennial philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians but for all mankind. The Bhagwadgita is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the perennial Philosophy.” This philosophy of the practical approach is an outcome of the philosophy of Spirit advocated by the Bhagwadgita. Ethical action is enjoined even after metaphysical realisation from the viewpoint of ‘Lokasangraha’. The profound secret

of the Bhagwadgita sees truth in its many-sidedness and firmly believes in its saving power. The Bhagwadgita in short, serves even today as a guide to all who tread the path of righteousness and have to decide their problems of action and inaction. In the Bhagwadgita we find the best solution of the ethical problems of conflict between knowledge and feeling, duty and desire, wisdom and action. Lord Krishna is never weary of telling Arjuna to be virtuous; His own sympathies are decidedly on the side of righteousness, it is to reestablish right when the wrong prevails that he takes birth as man.

### 3. Literary Beauty of the Gita

The first great merit that the poem possesses is its dramatic and striking beginning, which rouses the curiosity of the reader, and asks him to go through the entire composition.

Another outstanding merit of the poem is its easy flow and therefore the sermons of the Lord do not become boring to the listener or reader.

Again the song is not monotonous, because the sermon is interspersed with questions put by Arjuna to the Lord. Another device used to avoid this monotony is the use of different metres.

In addition to these merits, the poem possesses the quality of 'prasada' i. e. simplicity of language and benediction. This is one of the reasons why the Bhagwadgita is so popular and why in many homes it is daily recited. Beautiful descriptions like Arjuna's dejection, the qualities of a 'Sthitaprajna', 'Trigunatita' and 'Bhakta' add to the charm of the song.

The element of 'Adbhuta' (awe and wonder,) especially in the chapters of 'Vibhutyoga' and 'Vishwarupa-Darsana' adds grace to the poem. When a practical hard-headed businessman looks at a beautiful scene, say a garden of flowers, or a pleasant orchard of fruits, or the flow of rivers, and a waterfall, instead of appreciating the beauty of nature or the hand of Divinity behind it, he dreams of gain in terms of money and thinks in terms of its market value. The Gita runs down such business-minded attitude of a greedy materialist towards the objects of nature. The propagator of the literary viewpoint says, if a man is to find peace and happiness and to settle all his quarrels and bickerings he must adopt and appreciate the poetic view of life so far as nature is concerned and not run after

utilitarian business attitude to think in terms of gain and gold. Poets of the world both past and present endorse this view. They had and have lived upto this ideal and manifested the same through their works. The chapter on 'Vibhutyoga' is a full proof of this poetic ideal advocated by the Gita

The poetic ideal of life however cannot eradicate from its root the passion from the human mind. If the chapter on Vibhutyoga is to be fully understood in its true perspective, one must remember that it is an attempt on the part of the Lord to bring near God who is outside Nature and far beyond it, without degrading him or without his degeneration. The God in Heaven becomes the God in Nature, the God in nature becomes the God who is Nature, the God who is Nature becomes the God within the temple of the body and the God dwelling in the temple of the body is finally identified with him—the devotee. The chapters on Vibhutyoga and Vishwarupadarshan make the devotee a really God-integrated personality. This is not sublimation but purely a conversion of the outlook towards Nature and its objects.

The use of literary paradoxes such as "He is within all beings-without—" "Motionless, yet still moving" —make a delightful reading

The above literary elements dispel the doubt of the Bhagwad-gita being an impossibility on the battlefield

Another factor that lends charm to this beautiful poem is that Krishna, the charioteer of Arjuna, the great Warrior becomes his friend, philosopher and guide. This quick change over amazes the reader

The most natural dialogue between the teacher and the disciple is another point of beauty. The pithy and epigrammatic sentences like "Na me bhaktah pranasyati", "Dhurastatra na muhyati", "Yoga-Kshemam vahamyaham" are assets of the poem

Thus the poem possesses a number of graces threaded like pearls in a necklace

#### 4. Philosophical Approach

But the Bhagwadgita is not merely a scripture nor is it a book of ethics, nor a best literary gem. It is more than all these. Its lasting value is because of its metaphysics, its philosophy of Self and non-Self (Atma and Anatma). A student of philosophy

is enamoured of the correct and exact discrimination between the Self and non-Self. Leading philosophers of this land and the whole world have been deeply touched and have found comfort in this great book, only due to its thorough and complete analysis of this universal riddle of the Self and the non-Self. The clear understanding of this problem result in the renewal of life, an all-round development of the body, mind and spirit and all-sided perfection in knowledge. Thoughtful men always devote themselves to speculation on metaphysical problems and insist on the necessity of pure knowledge for release. Knowledge is primarily concerned with the Self and aims at realising the identity of the Self with the Absolute. The whole content of the Gita lies in the field of knowledge. Arjuna is taught that the aspirant should know the nature of true work, that the non-Self is distinct from the Self. The Self is birthless and inactive, transcendent and yet imminent and dwelling in the hearts of all. In the Bhagwadgita we not only come across the subtle demarcation of the Self and the non-Self, but also the ways to attain this perception of the Self as distinct from non-Self. This perception can be attained by approaching those who know, with humility and with reverence and questioning them after a careful study of the sacred scriptures, self-subjection, severe control and discipline. It is, therefore, the science of reality and the art of union with reality, as indicated by the colophons "Brahmavidya" and "Yogashastra". To apprehend the Self one must be ready to undergo rigorous discipline, to cleanse the mind of all distractions, purge from the heart all corruption and concentrate upon the Self. The Self alone is to be seen, heard, contemplated and meditated on. Everything else will be known by those who have seen, thought of and understood the Self.

### **5. The Eye of Devotion ' Bhakti '**

The philosophical approach to the Gita is no doubt very good. But the real philosopher cannot be barren of devotion. The man of perfect knowledge is full of love. He develops the relationship of trust and love for a personal God. He tunes his will to the Divine purpose. His heart longs to dwell incessantly in all lives to come, in the contemplation of the flood of supreme bliss the union of the soul with God. The Lord of such devotee is not in serene and calm contemplation untouched by the heart of his devotees. He is a saving God of Love believed and

experienced as such by the devotee. He is the bestower of salvation on those who believe in Him, "Thus is my word of promise, that He who loveth me shall not perish".

The approach of devotion is, therefore, the approach of love to personal God. Its foundation is faith, and the response with which it meets is grace. Devotion can only manifest itself in man when God is conceived of as a personal God, a Saviour worthy of trust and ready to be gracious. The doctrine of 'avatara' propounded in the Gita supports this. In this poem we do not only find the personality of God, but also his descent among men for gracious purposes. This science of love, is a vital element in the way of life. This is the speciality of the Gita. In the words of W. P. Hill, "One of the Gita's strongest claims to fame, one of the Chief causes of its age-long popularity, is the fact that after centuries of pent-up emotion it presented the worshipper with a visible object of devotion and taught the value of pure, disinterested Love in the religious life."

A scient-Devotee (Jnani-Bhakta) loves the Gita for reasons stated above. He cannot sit tongue-tied when the name of the Gita comes. He has a charming and enchanting attraction for the Gita, for its doctrines of knowledge and devotion. He declares that the object of devotion in the Gita is a person worthy of love. Again the devotion of the Gita is no unreasoned ecstasy, divorced from the duties of practical life and dictates of common sense. Devotion is but one essential element in a religious attitude where knowledge and action play their due part. No true religion should ignore emotion, and no true emotion should isolate itself from the functions of reason and will and the balanced man must develop fully every element that makes up personality. It is for these reasons that the best Jnanin is also the best Bhakta, and thus a perfect man.

## 6. Vision of Devotion

Devotees have gone very deep in their experience of love. They consider that out of all the qualifications love for the Lord is the most important one because if the love for the Lord is deep-rooted in a man, he is inspired to acquire all the rest, and all the rest of the qualifications would never be sufficient without the love for the Lord. Scholars mistake the notion of love for an intense desire for liberation from the cycle of births and deaths and

for union with God. They forget that to put it that way sounds selfish and gives only a part of the meaning. The devotee, in fact, wills to be one with God, not in order that he may escape from weariness and sufferings, but in order that he may act with Him and as He does, because of his deep love for him. We find eminent devotees like Tukaram, Narshimha Mehta and others praying for birth in this world and not for liberation. Even Shankaracharya, the propagator of absolute non-dualism, has prayed for rebirth in his Bhakti songs.

Arjuna explains three outlooks of such devotees, namely as (a) a son, (b) a friend and (c) a beloved.

The Gita does not advocate the idea that a devotee is the servant of the Lord, nor that he is a beggar before the Lord. Such attitudes of love have given rise to the concepts of weariness and sufferings and devotion as a means to escape such sufferings by attaining liberation.

#### *The Devotee as a Son*

(a) The attitude of the devotee as a son of God is an enlightened attitude. He enjoys the pleasures and sufferings in the world as if he is in the house of his father. He never prays to escape from weariness and sufferings. He denies any such weariness and sufferings and says that even if they are sent by his father, the God, it is his duty as an ideal son to decrease such weariness and sufferings of the world, and thereby feel and give happiness for himself and to his father. God is his mother too. The devotee gets paternal as well as maternal love from God. In the Gita he reads the paternal admonishment if senses make him deviate from his path of devotion, and he also reads the full-fledged manifestation of maternal love and affection, shielding the faults of her devotion-minded son and encouraging his little acts of grace. The devotee feels he is, as if, taken in the lap by his Divine Mother, given a kiss and asked to mend his ways of life. Thus here every word of the Gita is acceptable to him because it is his Father's discourse and mother's kind letter.

#### *The devotee as a friend*

(b) The attitude of the devotee as a friend of God is a praiseworthy attitude. The devotee of this stage is far advance than a common man, say, even more than an ethical man. When



the culmination point of this attitude is reached the devotee experiences smallness and dependence and feels that this smallness and dependence are bound to remain in the attitude of the devotee as a son. Parents are always great both in age and experience, they are independent too in their thinking and ways of life. They greet the child and thereby do favour to him by giving him their blessings.

The devotee, therefore, is after a state of mind wherein these ideas of smallness, dependence and favour have no place. He is inspired to adopt the friendly attitude. In this frame of mind the devotee is replenished with the spirit of equality with the Lord. Life becomes a play for the devotee. He feels that he has been made to take birth upon this planet by the Lord to give him company in His Divine play. There is no question of smallness, dependence or favour in a game between two friends. Both have equality of qualities and abilities. Furthermore the devotee feels that he is an invitee to the play, and therefore gets special treatment in all respects from the Lord, and yet he is no way under any obligation to the Lord.

#### *The Devotee as a beloved*

(a) The devotee in the attitude of a friend of the Lord experiences equal status with the Lord, but thereby he fears he may lose regard and respect for the Lord, and the ego may overpower him. The devotee looks forward to a state wherein he can mingle both smallness and sameness, dependence and independence, favour and equality. On the horizon of his supremely divine mind then dawns the enchanting blissful moon-like outlook of himself, being a beloved of the Lord. The mixed feelings which a beloved experiences are indescribable in words. She is to her husband more than his better half. The better half experiences to a greater extent the above-mentioned mixed feelings of smallness and sameness, dependence and independence, favour and equality, but she claims her husband as of right and therefore envies her husband's beloved. Whereas it is not so in the case of beloved. She has no claim to make and therefore is acclaimed by her lover. She enjoys union as well as separation. She does not envy the better half, though the better half envies her. Therefore, emerges the final blissful outlook of only pure love of the beloved, not bothering about qualities. A beloved always longs for her lover.

She enjoys this longing, as well as the union with her lover. A wife has no longing, she has the pleasure of union, but a beloved has the additional happiness of longing. Therefore, the beloved shares the heart of her lover, she has intimacy with him, she is one with him, and yet she is distinct from him.

The devotee of this state of mind experiences unbounded bliss from the Gita, for it contains the utterances of his lover, the Lord. His mind is untouched by the critics and scholars. The Gita is a love-letter of Lord, the Lover, to a devotee of this state. Every word of it brings before his mind the picture of his blissful lover. He reads and re-reads the letter. His behaviour becomes mysterious after reading the Gita. He at times sheds tears and sometimes laughs boisterously; he sometimes becomes serene, whereas at other times he jumps and dances with overwhelming joy; he turns pages after pages of the love-letter or he sits staring at one page only; he becomes verbose in his talk about lover's letter to his friends, or he keeps complete silence even when questioned. He is in his own self at all such times and at all such moments. It is a matter of rare fortune for worldly people to have Darshan of such devotees, and even after having Darshan to understand their hearts.

Thus before the rise of knowledge, duality is misleading but when our understanding is enlightened, we perceive, that duality is more beautiful than even non-duality and is conceived so that there might be worship, and worship is hundred times greater than liberation. The milkmaids of Gokul had spiritual peace even without knowledge because of their attitude as beloved towards the Lord. We find total surrender to the Supreme in the attitude of the devotee as a beloved.

### *Conclusion*

Thus the Gita propounds the different roads by which the end of spiritual aspiration is reached. The beauty of love excites the poet, the devotion does the devotee, philosophy the philosopher, morality the Moralists and Sanctity the Pious just as Krishna was perceived in different forms when he entered the royal Court of Kamsa, so also the Gita is perceived in different ways by persons according to their outlooks, and they find justification for their outlook. The Gita is our Mother, and like Mother the Gita looks after the needs of all her children, high or low, small or great,

literate or illiterate, philosopher or devotee, moralist or religionist

But so far as I am concerned, I behold the Gita as a love-letter and I lose myself in it I do not find its equal even in the Vedas or the Upanisads then why talk of other scriptures of the world ?

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## REAL REVERENCE FOR THE GITA \*

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Sri Satya Sai Baba

Speakers who are out to spread the Gita have multiplied now-a-days and as a consequence, a variety of interpretations, most of them far removed from the genuine one, has emanated, clouding the true significance. Interpretations follow the nature and character of each exponent. Once an opinion is formed, he tries to buttress it with appropriate arguments and prove all others wrong. It is then repeated parrot-like on every occasion; no attempt is made to practise the Gita and make it part of one's actual life. Such persons pretend to be great Gita *Pracaraks* and go about, heavy with the burden of credentials and titles. They ruin themselves by this deception and undermine the trust placed in the Gita.

The words of God are, each one, fit for translation into actual life, not, for scattering into the ears of men to reap fame. But, the times have gone so awry that they are today, misused for acquiring publicity and praise ! Those who listen to the expositions of these *Pracaraks*, are also neglecting to question the bonafides, they do not care to examine whether the persons, who extol the Gita to the skies, have tasted the sweetness of its teachings. Words and deeds are far apart; they exhort others but those who are exhorted find that the teachers do not themselves follow the lesson ! No, not even one in a million.

There are some who boast that they have the entire Gita on

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the tip of the tongue, that they can roll out, on the spot, any *shloka* from the Gita which you want to hear, if only the chapter and number are given, or, they can quote chapter and number for any phrase or word you give. I am inclined to laugh when such scholarship is exhibited. Poor tongue, that it should carry so much on its tip, without any of it being absorbed in actual life or daily practice ! A gramophone record can repeat as well as they; and with equal benefit to itself. Practising one verse certainly yields more benefit than learning all the verses by rote and retaining them in memory. Arjuna proved every word of Krishna true, by practising it. His sincerity won him the Grace of Krishna.

It is a pity that even extremely learned Pundits at the present time are unaware of the thrill of putting into practice a single word of the Gita. What then are we to say of the nonlearned, the ignorant ? In short, even some very reputed exponents of the Gita are paying false to its teaching, acting contrary to the message. To the Song of the Lord, each one adds a fancy note of his own, to demonstrate his special twist in scholarship, or his favourite predilection. Let us consider one example of this type : The 10th verse of the 6th chapter of the Gita declares that " Parigraha " is a great sin.

Now, those who accept the Gita as authority should act avoiding Parigraha, isn't it ? Parigraha means " accepting " even for the upkeep for the body and the maintenance of Dharma ! These *Pracaraks* however, do accept, 99 per cent. of them ! The condemnation of Parigraha applies to all forms, there are no modifying circumstances or exceptions. Yet, collections and contributions are asked for Gitayajnas, as ' offerings ' during Arati, as expenses for the Gita Pracarak Sanghas, as Nazar or Kanuka for the Guru, lectures are ' sold ' for tickets, as entertainment ( like the drama and cinema ) is sold. People who do these have no faith in the words of Krishna; for, had they the faith, they would not have behaved in such contrary ways. If they were convinced that it is wrong, they would not be tempted to act so. They explain the *Shloka* to others and feel that their duty is done, they don't feel the need to follow the advice themselves. That is the spirit of the times, for, this is the age of hypocrisy. People who watch this type of Gita Pracar lose faith first in the

*Pracarak* and later, in the Gita itself. The publicity dissolves into mere pomp and vanity.

The teachings of the Gita do not get the respect that the book gets. Thousands of people, when they see the sacred books, Gita, Ramayana, Bhagavata, Bharata, etc., bow their heads, press them to their eyes, place them on their heads, keep them on a special Seat in the shrine and reverentially placing a few flowers on them, they sit with closed eyes and, with tear-drops rolling down their cheeks, fall prostrate before the books and rise very much satisfied with themselves ! All that reverence is for the stack of paper, really; not for the contents of the books, the subjects they deal with.

What the head must carry is not the weight of the paper, but, the message explained thereon. Attach value not to the book, but to the subject; revere, not the volume, but the matter expounded therein. Install it not on the altar, but, in the heart. For it is only then that the authority of the Gita will be honoured steadily, at all times. The mind will not be cleansed of egoism or the like evils by all these outward forms of reverence : learning by rote, offering worship in the shrine room, holding on the head, pressing on the eyes etc. Let the message enter the heart; put it into actual practice and taste the joy that comes therefrom. That is the way of honouring the Gita.

The tastiest dish can never end your hunger, if you place it on the head or press it to your eye or fall prostrate before it. The Gita too is on par with this. The Gita is a tasty dish, full of the sweet ingredients of Bhakti, Jnana, Karma and Vairagya. Eat it; drink it. One mouthful is enough. The hungry man does not need all the grain that is harvested, a handful of rice suffices. The thirsty man need not drink the Godavari dry; a glass of water is enough.

He who has hunger for God need not consume the entire Gita, it can be quenched by practising even one *Shloka*. A box of matches has many sticks; if you want to light a fire, you need strike only one; you can grow the little flame into a huge fire, with care and diligence. The entire stock of sticks need not be struck. There are 700 sticks in the Gita, each one, a stick from which you can light the flame of Jnana. Strike one on the stone of experience, that is enough.

The Gita has to be used thus for self realisation, that is the holy task for which it is designed. It is a great wrong to misuse it, all attempts to use for fame and fortune, for titles and display are but symptoms of egoism, they are acts of sacrilege. The 'gandha' must be extracted from this 'grantha'; that is the test of scholarship, the fragrance (gandha) is the essence of the book (grantha). Do not on the other hand transform the *mastaka* into a *pustaka*, the brain into a book.

See God in the stone, do not change God into stone. That is the vision, which is highly desirable. The stone must be visualised as Divine, suffused with God, which it really is. This vision is the precious gift that God has given the people of this land. Pearls do not float on the waves of the ocean, dive deep into the silent caverns at the bottom if you yearn for them. The people of this land have sought God in this manner since ages.

The practice of Dharma is the body, the realisation of God is the heart, this is the truth that has urged the people here to march forward and save themselves. They are not slaves to mere outward polish, external embroidery, or material comfort. They search for the basic Atma with the inner eye and cultivate detachment from everything which hampers that search. The people of Bharatavarsha, who have this grand nature, are, however, attracted today by material progress and outward pomp. This is a tragedy much to be regretted.

Those who go about expounding the Gita with the object of earning money are thereby keeping God far. They may find out and give various justifications for their behaviour, no doubt; but, no one who has real faith in the Gita or who is a real adherent to its teaching can accept their explanations.

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## THE GITA AND THE NEW AGE

T. L. Vaswani

The Gita has grown upon me as the years have passed, until today it fills me, fills my life, gives it a meaning, a joy, that flows as a mountain stream

In the days of my youth, my soul was stricken with sadness and darkness brooded upon my world. In that period of my life, Sri Krishna was to me but a name or a long-forgotten figure of a dead past. Yet my very bones cried out, again and again :—  
“ O Thou, the Ancient One, give me the light I need; storms and darkness have fallen upon me Give me the light ”

In that night of my soul, methinks there came to me an urge from within .—“ Be a little one, and be still ” I entered more and more, into silence I began to understand what detachment is. In silence, I began to learn what “ re-valuation ” of life means to a pilgrim on the Path.

I took up the Gita and went through it, again and again, and learnt to meditate on it *shloks* by *shloks*. I lived for sometime, in silence, away from the crowds, away from shouts and tumults. In that period of silence, the thought of the Gita grew upon me, and I saw the Gita better I began to study the Gita (1) as a gospel of duty , (2) as a revelation of wisdom, and (3) as a scripture of dedicated life, a life of communion with Krishna and life of love and offering to the lowly and the heavy-laden in this world of tragedy and tears.

“ The beauty of the birds’ song is not measured by its length ”, said the Russian writer, Chekhov The beauty and wisdom of the Gita are not measured by its size. It has seven hundred verses



only But what a light they throw on man and his destiny. Here is a "structure built to music and, therefore, built forever."

To crowded audiences desirous to speak, today, professors and preachers of the Word of God Krishna's audience consisted of but one—Arjuna. And how brief, beautifully brief, is Krishna's song I have seen the whole of the Gita printed on one sheet of paper What a difference between our way and Krishna's way We are so talkative Krishna's way is so simple We are talkative because we talk metaphysics and we talk from books. Krishna's message is brief because it expresses life and life, true life, the life hidden in the heart, is this three fold communion with the divine, in nature, in man and in history

(2)

Many years ago, a little book was written by a Bavarian, a painter and musician. The name of the book was, *Book of the Secrets of God* It thrilled many men and women in Germany, Austria and Bavaria The Book was written by a simple man who did humble, manual work, day by day. Suddenly the life of this man, was transformed And they asked him —" Tell us how your life was transformed " And he said " They did it " " Who " ? They asked him And he said —" The great ones of the East They have been my Hidden Helpers " " Who are they—Your Hidden Helpers,—whom you call your Masters, and who have changed your life " And he said .—" The Gita and the Upanishads "

In his little book this Bavarian painter and musician gives a teaching which I have some times called the " Gita simplified " He says, Firstly .—" Go within you " Is this not too, the Gita's great word to all ? " Within you is the supreme " " Open your heart " Is the teaching of the Bavarian painter and musician, a teaching which re-interpretes in the very words of the Gita the central thought of Sri Krishna

Secondly says this Bavarian painter —" If you will open your heart, learn to shut out the ego " Is this not too, the teaching of the Gita ? The little " I " must go, if the God within you, is to grow

The *Book of the Secrets of God* says, thirdly " Make your life a song " The Gita is Krishna's song, asking everyone to make his life a song—, of dedication to the Divine Life Krishna's song

is a call to Life,—a life of new awakening, of self-effacement and self-realisation. Krishna gives us the essence of his spiritual communism in half a 'Shloka in the Gita, when he says that the man who cooks food for himself alone is a thief. A new social order cannot arise if we continue to trample upon the teachings of the Lord. We must not cook food for ourselves only. Let us share our food with others. Share what you have—share your money, your knowledge, your life, with others, and you will bear witness to the truth that God, verily, doth move in society.

It was in the dark days of famine, in Calcutta that I saw, several years ago the picture of a mother. In her arms was a pretty child for whom she begged. But the mother failed to get food and the child collapsed in the mother's arms. That picture has haunted me again and again. And I have, again and again recalled the words of the Gita :—" He who cooks food for himself alone is no better than a thief. " In such a world of " thieves " Krishna's true disciple moves with the longings in his heart to serve the Lord. Krishna's disciple wanders not to talk of creeds and philosophies :—He moves among men to bear witness to Krishna's Religion of Compassion, Fellowship and Love

Krishna calls us to go forth among the people to share with them what we have. To give love to our neighbours is verily to live the Gita.

Many years ago, I read of Flammarion, the well-known astronomer of France. He was over 80 years when he passed away. Once, they asked him, what the secret of his life and of his power of work was. " Yes, " he said, " I have worked steadily 10 hours a day " and they referred to his tremendous work everyday, blended with serenity of mind. " What is your secret ? " They asked him. He gently said —" I have never been ambitious " He paused, then said —" How can I look at the heavens and be ambitious ? " Flammarion was not ambitious. He only longed to serve suffering humanity.

So does the true disciple of Krishna. He lives in the presence of the Infinite and has compassion for the creation that groaneth in pain. His heart is humble and with the sweet incense of compassion in his heart he fain would serve men and women and birds and beasts and leaves and flowers and hills and streams and rocks and seas.

(3)

We are told that the present is a turning point in history. We are told that atomic or hydrogen energy, used at any time in a new world war, may destroy mankind. As I survey the situation of the world. I find the nations are swayed by cults of greed and power.

‘ And what about India ? ’ I am asked. What answer can I give ? Once India lived. Once her life was in communion with the *Atman*, the spirit, and with Universal Humanity. Today, India wanders in unrest. She will live again in the day she will verify and enrich the Gita’s vision of life. Her mission in the coming days is to reveal the synthesis of freedom and spirituality. To be truly spiritual—says the Gita—is to be truly free. For spirituality is inner liberation. And out of the inner are the issues of outer life.

At this hour, vice and vanity, luxury and pride, have sapped the inner strength of civilisation. At this hour the machine sits heavy on the heart of man. At this hour, Humanity lies wounded in the house of her own children who have renounced the worship of eternal values and built altars to the Gods of “ State ”, “ Empire ”, or “ Race ”. At this hour, in the silent spaces of the night, which is creeping over the nations, methinks, I hear the call of Sri Krishna, the call of the Gita.—“ Stand up, O Arjuna : and act unafraid, offering your life as a Yajna, in the service of the broken, bleeding children of Humanity ”.

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## EXISTENCE IS SUBSTANCE AND LIFE IS SHADOW \*

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**Meher Baba**

Existence is Eternal whereas Life is perishable

Comparatively existence is what his body is to man and Life is as the cloth that covers the body. The same body changes clothes according to the seasons, time and circumstances, just as the One and Eternal Existence is always there throughout the countless and varied aspects of life.

Shrouded beyond recognition by the cloak of Life with its multifarious folds and colours, is Existence Unchangeable. It is the garb of Life with its veils of mind, energy and gross forms that " shadows " and superimposes on Existence, presenting the eternal, indivisible and unchangeable Existence as transient, varied and ever-changing.

Existence is all-pervading, and is the underlying essences of all things, whether animate or inanimate, real or unreal varied in species or uniform in forms collective or individual, abstract or substantial

In the Eternity of Existence there is no Time. There is no Past and no Future; only the everlasting Present. In eternity nothing has ever happened and nothing will ever happen. Everything is happening in the unending NOW.

Existence is God, whereas, Life is illusion

Existence is Reality, whereas, Life is imagination.

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\* This lecture was delivered by the author at Rajahmundry, 1st March 1959 Printed here with the permission of the author as well as the publisher of his writing.

Existence is Everlasting, whereas, Life is ephemeral.  
 Existence is Unchangeable, whereas Life is ever-changing.  
 Existence is Freedom; Life is a binding  
 Existence is Indivisible, whereas Life is multiple  
 Existence is Imperceptible, whereas Life is deceptive  
 Existence is Independent, whereas Life is dependent on  
     mind, energy and gross forms  
 Existence is, whereas, Life appears to be.  
 Existence, therefore, is not Life

Birth and death do not mark the beginning or end of Life. Whereas the numerous stages and states of Life which constitute the so-called births and deaths are governed by the Laws of evolution and reincarnation Life comes into being only once, with the advent of the dim rays of limited consciousness and succumbs to death only once on attaining the Unlimited Consciousness of Infinite Existence

Existence, All-knowing, All-powerful, All-present God, is beyond cause and effect, beyond time and space, beyond all actions

Existence touches all, all shadows and all things Nothing can ever touch Existence. Even the very fact of its being does not touch Existence

To realize Existence, Life must be shed It is Life that endows limitations to the Unlimited Self Life of the Limited self is sustained by the mind creating impressions; by energy supplying the impetus to accumulate and dissipate these impressions through expressions, and by gross forms and bodies, functioning as the instruments through which these impressions are spent, reinforced and eventually exhausted through actions

Life is thickly linked with actions Life is lived through actions Life is valued through actions Life's survival depends on actions Life cognizant is actions—actions opposite in nature, actions affirmative and negative, actions constructive and destructive

Therefore, to let Life succumb to its ultimate death is to let all actions end When actions end completely, Life of the Limited self spontaneously experiences itself as Existence of the Unlimited Self Existence being realised evolution, and involution of consciousness is complete, illusion vanishes and the law of reincarnation no longer binds

Simply to desist from performing actions will never put an end to actions. It would merely mean putting into action yet another action—that of in-activity.

To escape from actions is not the remedy for the uprooting of actions. Rather, this would give scope to the limited self to get more involved in the very act of escaping, thus creating more actions. Actions both good and bad, are like knots in the tangled thread of life. The more persistent the efforts to undo the knots of action, the firmer become the knots and the greater the entanglement.

Only actions can nullify actions, in the same way that poison can counteract the effects of poison. A deeply embedded thorn may be extracted by the use of another thorn or any sharp object resembling it, such as a needle, used with skill and precaution. Similarly, actions are totally uprooted by other actions—when they are performed by some activating agent other than the “Self”.

Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga serve the purpose of being prominent signposts on the Path of Truth, directing the Seeker towards the Goal of Eternal Existence. But the hold of Life, fed by actions, is so tight on the aspirant that even with the help of these inspiring signposts he fails to be guided in the right directions. As long as the “self” is bound by actions, the aspirant, or even the pilgrim on the Path towards Truth, is sure to go astray through self-deceptions.

Throughout all ages, sadhus and seekers, sages and saints, *munis* and monks, *tapasvis* and *sanyasis*, *yogis*, *sufis* and *talibs*, have struggled during their life—time undergoing untold hardships in their efforts to extricate themselves from the maze of actions and to realise the Eternal Existence by overcoming Life.

They fail in their attempts because the more they struggle with their “Self” the firmer the “Self” becomes gripped by life, through actions intensified by austerities and penances, by seclusions and pilgrimages, by meditations and concentration, by assertive utterances and silent contemplation, by intense activity and inactivity, by silence and verbosity, by “japas” and “tapas” and by all types of Yogas and “*cheelas*”.

Emancipation from the grip of Life and freedom from the labyrinths of actions is made possible for all and attained by a

few, when a Perfect Master, Sadguru, or Qutub is approached and His grace and guidance are invoked. The Perfect Master's invariable counsel is complete surrender to Him. Those few who do surrender their all-mind, body, possession, so that with their complete surrender they also surrender consciously their own "Self" to the Perfect Master, yet have their very being left conscious to perform actions activated now only by the dictates of the Master.

Such actions, after the surrender of one's "Self" are no longer one's own actions. Therefore, these actions are capable of uprooting all other actions which feed and sustain life. Life then becomes gradually lifeless and eventually succumbs, by the grace of the Perfect Master, to its final death. Life, which once debarred the persevering aspirant from realizing Perpetual existence can now no longer work its own deception.

I have emphasised in the past, I tell you now and I shall, age after age, forever more repeat that you shed your cloak of Life and realize Existence which is eternally yours.

To realize this Truth of Unchangeable, Indivisible All-pervading Existence, the simplest way is to surrender to me completely; so completely that you are not even conscious of your surrender, conscious only to obey me and to act as and when I order you.

If you seek to live perpetually, then crave for the death of your "deceptive self" at the hands of "complete surrender" to me. This Yoga is the essence of all Yogas in one.

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## GEMS FROM THE TREASURY OF WISDOM

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**Avadhoot Mahendra Baba**

The Bhagawadgita is, to me, the greatest mine of wisdom ever given to the human race. From its sacred pages many beautiful gems flash their brilliance into the minds of men and become transformed into rays of divine light. From this book alone a man can find God and break the bonds of Samsara and rebirth.

The outstanding verses of this great work are so numerous that in any article or discourse only a few aspects can be presented. We must, of course, assume that the reader is already acquainted with the Gita and in order to prevent the tiresome repetition of verses, only chapter and verse references are given. The references have been chosen as a collection relating to the fundamentals of the Dharma and a basis which should be properly known and understood. We see and experience that too many Hindu people are turning to the worldly life and even to foreign Dharmas, because they cannot get help in understanding their own religion. From birth to death, the individual today, is being brain-washed and conditioned into a pattern of society which is mostly based on foreign ideas and does not lend itself to a spiritual life.

There are a number of vital points which one must know and accept if the term, 'Hindu' is to mean anything. This collection of references if studied with care form the ground-work upon which a Bhakta can build a life of happiness and gain that knowledge which will be his best investment for the future.

The Gita was never intended as light reading matter nor to be read through and put aside. We should not simply read



the Gita but give it the detailed study it deserves. This involves going through it verse by verse and even sitting in meditation to get inner knowledge of these verses which are not readily understood. This method is more helpful than reading the commentaries and opinions of others.

The Gita has been translated into English more than one hundred times and some of these have utilised all the beauty and expression of the English language to give it real meaning and expression. We should be happy that the English-speaking public have shown such interest and created such a tremendous demand for its widespread publication. Translations have also been made in most European languages and a Japanese translation has proved to be a best seller.

The Bhagawadgita is the most wonderful book ever written. Its compactness and sincerity have given it a larger following than any other printed book. For those seeking a nobler and better way of life it should be their constant companion. For those seeking the Great Liberation it is an indispensable text book. It is the only book one need ask a Bhakta to study and the only one we need recommend to enquirers overseas. Within its pages a man or woman will find a perfect guide from birth to death and beyond. It contains everything one needs to know and understand for the realization of and union with God.

We believe and accept the Gita as the revealed word of God, a restatement of truth which had already been taught in the distant past ( IV. 1-3 ). Viewed in this light the speculations of the scholars ( mostly foreign ), who try to probe beyond the Gita and form theories about its origin, age and possible forms, are mostly futile. These things are of no importance to the true Bhakta. Divine wisdom is viewed in the light of its spiritual value and not from the point of view of scholarship or history. The Gita is common to all Indian schools of thought which accept God and the authority of the Vedas. The devotees of Shiva, Dattatraya or Jagadamba are not perturbed in any way because the Gita is spoken by Lord Krishna. The true Hindu takes divine wisdom without regard for the source from whence it comes. If we believe that with God all things are possible, there is nothing which a true devotee need reject. A broad and wide acceptance of these things is of greater value in the spiritual life.

than reason, logic or analysis. Faith is still the foundation stone on which miracles are performed and the magic key to unlock the door to contentment, peace and happiness. If we are sincere in our faith and in whatever form we visualise and worship the divine, then that worship is acceptable to God ( VII 21 ) Faith is India's greatest need today; faith in the ancient past, faith in the present; faith in the future. The faith, insight and imagination of a child will find God while learning and scholarship will fail. We must not forget that the faith of Hanumanji was so great that he was able to fly through the air to reach Lanka, yet Shree Rama, the divine incarnation of God, had to build a causeway.

We may soon see the widespread breakdown of world religions but this will pave the way for a universal religion based on the teachings of the Bhagawadgita. Meanwhile, we cannot fail to see a spiritual decline in India over recent years. People are no longer appreciating their ancient cultures or treasures like the Bhagwadgita. Instead they are turning their attention to material things and imported ideas. Secularism, which is admired without any apparent reason, means a nation without God or religion. The idea was once popular in Western countries but has since been rejected. No nation ever flourished if it gave its attention only to material advance and neglected the moral stability of spiritual life. This brings us to a position where the Gita is needed more than ever today. Westernisation and industrial progress does not mean that one has to reject the Sanatana Dharma. The social reconstruction of the nation can only be possible when its people are reconstructed spiritually.

So many people call themselves Hindus without knowing what they are supposed to believe. It may be useful if we concentrate on the fundamental beliefs as they are also taught in the Gita.

A Hindu must accept Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Law) as being the revelation of god and recorded in the scriptures. In spite of wide range of philosophic schools and speculations in India, the majority recognised the authority of the Vedas and all thought has developed from this basis ( XVI 24 )

We must accept an eternal moral order. Such an order cannot exist without some supreme intelligence or God. It is founded

on moral justice where all receive good or bad, reward or punishment, according to their behaviour. The working of this moral order is based on the continuity of life by rebirth. Reward or punishment need not be immediate or even experienced in the present life but may come in the next life or a subsequent one. Most of the difficulties for the Bhakta today, come from ignoring this fundamental and instead of seeing life as a continual process of the soul, they think of it only in terms of the body's span between birth and death.

All through the Gita the Lord Krishna is telling us of aspects of faith, conduct and practice which lead to realisation of and union with God. If we forget the rebirth process we might be deluded into thinking that there are promises of immediate results or rewards, we will enjoy when the life span ends. But this we know cannot be, except to one born with exceptionally good karma or specially selected for the grace of God. A man's Sadhana generates a spiritual energy which is never lost. The body forgets but the soul never. The instructions given by the Lord are those which will lead a man to better and more favourable rebirth (VI 43).

A Hindu must believe and try to understand the law of Karma and rebirth. Understanding means our realisation that it is the soul which is real and not the transitory material body. Western civilisation, in spite of its attractions to young Indians today is based on two errors. One is that you can make Samsara a better place or even a paradise. The second is that comforts, ease, attention and well-being of the physical body are the only important things.

The Law of Karma was first revealed in the Vedas and has been adopted by other religions and philosophies. Jesus Christ believed in the reincarnation of the soul and it was widely accepted by the early church until a Council of bishops declared it to be against the teachings of the Roman Church.

The Lord Krishna opens his instructions on this very law because of the vital necessity to understand it. All other aspects of the Dharma proceed only with right thinking and this self-knowledge (II 11-20). Whether it is accepted on faith or known from realisation, it still remains the foundation on which Sadhana is built. All thinking must be done in terms of this

Law. Real knowledge comes when we see that only the soul is real and that the body is but a temporary garment which soon becomes worn out and must be thrown away ( II. 22 ).

Karma means two Things. First it can mean the actions of mind, speech or body. Good or bad Karma depends on the things we think, say, and do. Its second meaning is the force or energy created by our actions and which conditions and influences this life or the one to follow. Rebirth comes in accord with our Karma ( VI 40-42 ).

Deeds done with dispassion, without interest to do good or do bad, do not make Karma. Lord Krishna teaches us ( Ch II ) that dispassionate deeds performed according to a man's duty, do not register as Karma. 'To kill from lust, hatred, or anger will take a man to hell but for a warrior, doing only the duty for which he was born, there is no sin ( II. 31-33 ). We reap only the harvest according to our sowing. Know these things ( VII. 29 )

Dispassion is the great virtue which leads to liberation. Verse contents like those of II. 38-39 are frequently repeated and the mind must free itself when confronted with "the pairs of opposites"; good and bad, sweet and sour, hot and cold, love and hate, etc. When liberation is attained a man may still have to endure pain and sickness so long as he still has the body. A liberated one (Jeevanmukta) knows that he has brought the rebirth process to an end and he makes no more evil Karma.

No aspect of the Gita is more neglected than the Sadhana prescribed for the final stages of liberation. Again and again we are given the methods by which we can be released from rebirth and united with God. The method has three distinct aspects. They are devotion to God, self-control and meditation. They are intended to be practised in unity. This is the successful combination which will lead to self-realisation ( Atmajnana ) and has been used by saints and sages for thousands of years. Because nobody has previous experience when approaching this Sadhana, Krishna called for unflinching faith. Faith is necessary in both the methods and the Goal ( IV. 39 ).

This is not a call for blind faith or ignorance. It is an appeal to have confidence in a path which has already been successfully

taught by others. With time and practice, this faith turns to knowledge and understanding.

The Gita gives us much practical instructions in meditation (VI 10-15 XVIII. 52-54 · V. 27-28). These are the practical methods of all schools aiming at liberation. It is the system which will develop concentration and purify the mind so that it is fit to receive and realise the Absolute.

Side by side with devotion and meditation the need for self-control and right conduct. Sadhana is of little use if we continue to store up Bad Karma. The whole of chapter XVI is spoken by the Lord Krishna and gives the clearest outline ever taught as to what bad conduct is and what good conduct is. A warning is given to those who ignore moral conduct (XVI. 19-20) and a reminder that evil people will take rebirth on lower planes of existence. From such rebirth escape is difficult. Moral conduct and virtues of self control are clearly indicated (XIII. 7-11 XVI 1-3., XVIII 53)

In relation to all Sadhana and the efforts we make in the spiritual life, there is the assurance that nothing we do is useless or lost. What we fail to attain in this life will be reaped in another. The soul remembers and knows all its past experiences. The efforts made in the past or present life will lead to better rebirth and give us favourable opportunities in the future lives (VI 40-46)

Some devotees do not approach serious Sadhana and sometimes they become both desperate and discouraged, thinking they should attain all that can be attained in their few declining years. They forget that the spiritual understanding they have in this life is probably the result of countless rebirths.

The Gita makes it clear that the highest goal is not reserved for any select few. Although more rebirths might be required for the ultimate success, everyone should make some efforts. The teaching that some lower castes are debarred from spiritual life is not taught either in the Vedas or the Gita (IX 32)

The spiritual life is not a selfish desire. Many who find the gems of wisdom and have varied success wish to share their happiness with others. There is no higher gift that one could give to another than knowledge or information which will set others on the right path. The Hindu religion has always lacked

missionary zeal and enthusiasm, yet the Lord Krishna makes it so very clear that they who help others on to the path of liberation are the dearest to Him. This service is the greatest service we can give to God ( XVIII. 68-69 ). This is one of the closing messages spoken by the Lord Krishna. Those who love the Bhagawadgita would want to share its gems with others. There is no more solid or practical way to spread peace, happiness and contentment than this. The man or woman who works for the moral and spiritual uplift of humanity makes the greatest contribution to the peace and prosperity of the world.

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## ETERNAL VALUE OF THE GITA

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**Shreeram Gosavi**

There is always an objection against the old book like the Gita, from the so-called progressivists that, as the times and circumstances have changed, it is of no use reading and repeating the value of such old books. These people conveniently forget that however much times and circumstances may change, there are certain things which do not change. Seasons change but the Sun does not change and heat and light given by the Sun are always necessary for life. Disease may change from man to man, but the need of food in some form or other is always there for sustaining life, and the laws pertaining to it and the laws of hygiene are always permanent.

In the same way, there is some permanent truth in this world and life. The Gita gives us the knowledge of such a truth in this world and life and hence its value is eternal and permanent. The Kurukshetra where the battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas was fought may be a tiny plain and therefore may be insignificant but when it is seen that life itself is a Kurukshetra—a struggle for existence, as Darwin has said, then we cannot overlook the value of such a Kurukshetra. The problem before Arjuna whether to fight with the Kauravas or not, may be a temporal one, but when we find that such problems always arise before man and when he is confused as to his place in the world and as to his duties in life, there comes the Gita to solve the problems of human life and to show the path he has to travel. Herein lies the eternal value of the Gita.

## WORLD AND LIFE

What is the truth about the world and life according to the Gita ? “ By me, all this world is pervaded ” says the Teacher. All beings have root in me As the mighty air moving everywhere is rooted in ether, so all beings rest rooted in me. Hidden in nature, which is mine own, all this multitude of beings, emanates from me by the force of Nature Under me, nature sends forth the moving and the unmoving and this universe goes on. I am the father, mother, and supporter of this universe ”

According to the Gita, God is the creator of this world and life. “ Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Mind, Reason and Ego, this is the eight-fold division of my lower nature. And there is my higher nature—the life—element of all beings I am the womb of all that exists. All this universe is strung on me as rows of pearls on a string ” says the Gita

## WORLD—THE PLAY OF GOD

God has created this world, all beings are his play-things and the world is His play ( Lila ). This play is going on according to the laws of play. God has set the wheel in motion. “ He, who does not follow the wheel that is set in motion is sinful and lives in vain ” Hence the necessity of Karmayoga. We must do our duties as long as we live “ Even I engage in action though I have nothing to gain or loss. For if I engage not in action unwearied, then the world will fall into ruin.” Hence the Gita insists on doing our duties The Gita is not the book of renunciation of the world.

## THE GREAT PATH

We must know this world and life, not physically only, but spiritually also. Without that knowledge, we will never reach perfection. The knowledge of God, this world and life is very necessary. We i. e beings are the sparks of the great Divinity and actors in his Divine play. Therefore our individuality must go. With egoism we can never have union with God and his great Divine play Attachment to life and physical enjoyments is a great hindrance in the long journey of the soul Our soul and not the body is eternal reality With egoism and attachment to worldly life gone, we can have eternal union with Divinity and his Divine play. Then and then only life will not be a burden and death



will not be a scarecrow. All the saints have gone by this royal path. Once united with the Divinity and His will the soul will have no pangs of birth and death, for there will always be the knowledge of the eternity of the soul and with the devotion for Divinity the soul will have eternal happiness in the grand cosmic play, as he will have gone beyond the egoistic sense of the ordinary beings on the earth

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्द्वपाश्रयः ।

सत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ १८-५६ ॥

“ Ever performing all his duties, taking refuge in Me by My grace, he obtains the eternal abode. ”

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## THE GOSPEL ON WISDOM

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**Swami Venkateshananda**

Under the weight of misplaced sympathy, Arjuna had collapsed on the battlefield. We should not get the impression from the Bhagawadgita that sympathy is undesirable nor that war and killing are in any way desirable. What Krishna insists upon is (a) that virtue should spring from wisdom and not from fear of prison here, or hell elsewhere, and (b) that our actions should not be governed by selfish, and egoistic motivation, but that we should realise that we do His Will.

Feigned virtue is worse than evil. Whereas personal hatred may lead us to criminal conduct, when it is unmasked, it will hatch a plot which will disrupt the social structure, if it is masked by a cloak of virtue. The latter will often instigate one to social and political agitation in whose guise one can “legally” indulge in the crime one is averse to commit openly. Virtue should be second-nature; only then is it real. Krishna merely unmasks Arjuna’s personality and points out to him that his “virtue” was but a cloak to his fear and vanity.

In one verse and one of the greatest of verses—Krishna lifts Arjuna and with him us too out of the morass of misery. “*ashochyananvashochastvam*” “You are worrying unnecessarily.” This, when it is used as a Mantra, can save us from endless worries and anxieties. “Don’t worry”—should not be construed to mean encouragement of callousness. On the contrary, it is a commandment not to waste precious physical, mental and psychic forces in worry but to use them in working and in thinking well. The distinction between these two should be clearly borne in mind.

When a task is ahead of us it is work to be done. By concentrating all our attention on it and using all our faculties, we can tackle it well. The indolent man lets the task remain undone and when the opportunity has passed behind him, begins to worry. In front, it was work; behind, it is worry. This worry again cannot recall lost time, nor recapture lost opportunity. It can only make us ignore the present opportunity, too ! Though the good God has put our two eyes in front ( so that we may always look forward, eagerly to achieve success in life ), the unwise man insists on looking constantly behind him. That driver is a menace to himself and to society, who drives looking at the backseat passenger. We are allowed only to turn our head sideways and to look in front . we need only scan the entire horizon in front of us, perceive every task in its correct context, and then keeping our gaze right in front, go ahead We should never worry.

“ You are worried, and you speak as though you are a man of wisdom ” says Krishna, addressing Arjuna, and us, too Worry and wisdom do not go together. If your wisdom cannot guide you in your life, what is it worth ? If you are wise and let that wisdom guide you, you will have no time to worry. “ Wise men do not worry about the living ( present ) or the dead ( past ) ” Look at the graveyard, where lie in peace they, who worried themselves with the thought that but for them the world would be ruined ! That worry perhaps took them sooner to the grave but did not alter the course of the world

We bury the dead so should we bury the dead past, our memories of past experience, in order that we may have enough room in our mind for the present thoughts and experiences Just as a wise heir buries one of his father's properties ( viz the body ), but keeps the other ( viz his wealth ), the wise man will forget the past experience, but cherish the wealth of wisdom, he gained therefrom If the latter were also thrown away, he will remain poor If the past unpleasant experience is not forgotten, the heart will be ruled by baser passions of animosity, hatred, malice, and vengeance

If we are not worried about the past, we are worried about our future ! There is a lady in South Africa who went off her mind when she was told that the world would perish two million or so years hence ! There are they, who are always worried about

the distant future. In their endeavour to ensure a happy life then, they make themselves miserable now. Worrying over that future, they miss present opportunities which could have ensured just what they wanted—happy future. Wisdom consists in calmly analysing the present situation and living up to the very best standards in the light of one's own knowledge and understanding : and this itself will ensure that the future, when it becomes the " present " will find us ready to handle it similarly. We should work for it, plan for it and strive towards that ideal; but not worry about it.

In all such cases it is wonderful to visualise Sri Krishna standing in front of us and, with a smile on his lips, saying to us : " You are worrying unnecessarily. " The worry will instantly leave us

Krishna does not stop there, but goes on to impart to Arjuna the highest spiritual knowledge. Scholars have pounced upon this circumstance to declare that (a) on the battle-field, neither Krishna nor Arjuna could have been in a mood to discuss metaphysics and (b) there was no need for metaphysics to solve the issue on hand. On the basis of this theory, they have ventured the theory that the whole of the Gita is an interpolation by a clever poet who wanted to immortalise his composition even at the risk of forfeiting his glory

Krishna's actions were never without significance. This is the lesson I draw from the fact that the Gita was revealed by him on the battle-field " Look ", the Lord seems to say, " I declared it on the battlefield; and you should apply it in the daily battle of your life, not discuss it to pass your idle moments. Not when your life is sweet but when you are called upon to swallow the bitter pill of suffering, defeat and dishonour—should you apply the Gita to your life. "

With regard to the second objection, too, I think Krishna was right. Often in our life, we do not look at the problems of our life squarely in their face and solve them at the very root. We take the easy way out, content with a makeshift attempt to tide over the immediate crisis. The evil root is still there and throws up an even greater crisis soon after. Since we took the easy way out, out of cowardice and weakness, we do not possess the inner strength to face the greater crisis and we collapse. If we wish

to enjoy peace of mind and happiness, we should at the first sign of a problem or conflict in our life, seek its root and eliminate it there. This will also give us sufficient inner spiritual strength to face others when and if they arise later on.

Hence taking advantage of the situation, Lord Krishna gets to the root of the problem facing Arjuna ( viz. ignorance of the nature of the soul, the world and God ) and removes it once for all

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## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BHAGAWADGITA

**Dr. E. P Coelho**

To appreciate any literary work and its worth, we must know the time of its composition, as can be determined from the social, religious, economic and political conditions of the time. From the language of the Gita, it is apparent that it was composed some time during the Smṛiti period. It was a time when Buddhism with its ideals of casteless and classless society had taken a firm hold on the mind of the common man. It was a time when the tribal hordes such as the Parthians, the Shakas, the Huns and the Kushans, having migrated into India, were struggling for political power here. It was a time when the Vedic religion with its outgrown sacrificial cult was fading into insignificance and disbelief. It was also a time when the caste-system had become hardened into water-tight compartments as never before.

Shankaracharya is said to be a pioneer of the revivalist movement of the Brahmanic religion. But the real inspiration to the new movement came from the Gita. The Gita was, therefore, the very basis and the backbone of the new movement. 'The Song Divine' pithily summarises in seven hundred verses the gist of the Vedic religion and the Vedantic thought. During the Vedic period there were seers who posed and propounded that religion under divine inspiration. During the Vedantic period the thinkers, apparently dissatisfied with the Vedic conception of God Almighty, were making search of that God Almighty not under divine inspiration, but through the newly evolved technique of contemplation, meditation, penance, prayer, discussion and

reasoning, but their search even, ended in disappointment and frustration, as is apparent from their utterances such as 'It is not; ' 'It is unknown and unknowable ' Such agnostic tendencies coupled with the atheistic beliefs of Buddhism, were viewed with horror by a section of the society of the time. It was, therefore, to counteract these tendencies and to re-establish the prestige and the profession of the Brahmanic priestly class that the Gita came to be composed. The purpose of the Gita was to revive the sacrificial cult, that has become a source of income and the sole prop of maintenance to the priests. The prevalence and the preponderance of Buddhism had adversely affected their trade and had created a new class of monks and nuns living on the charity from the State and society and having become a nuisance to society.

There were no temples nor idols in the Vedic times. A common man even to-day cannot think and conceive in the abstract and hence during the Vedic period, there arose the necessity of the sacrifices. In the beginning sacrifices were a means to an end, but as time passed they became an end in themselves. A sacrifice used to be performed to propitiate the nature-gods for the fulfilment of the desires of the hosts but as the sacrifice could not yield the desired fruit, the whole institution of sacrifice began to suffer discredit and extinction. During the Smṛiti period the cult of sacrifice had become little known and hence the Vedic learning of which the priestly class was a repository, began to show signs of decay and hence the Gita stresses the importance of sacrifice. The word 'sacrifice' occurs in the Gita about thirty times, but a new meaning is given to sacrifice. The new meaning was that the performance of sacrifice was not for external or material reward but for mental peace and satisfaction and the reaffirmation of Faith in God Almighty.

The Gita explodes the belief that God is unknown and unknowable. The sacred song affirms that God reveals himself from time to time when there is moral chaos in this world and God reveals Himself to raise the moral level of society. Thus Lord Krishna who was a man-god or a personal god reveals himself as God Almighty, an all-pervading God, to whom people must submit and surrender. Lord Krishna is a god-man first and then God, while in most other religions, either God becomes a man or deposes one with a special message.

Side by side with sacrifice as a means to mental peace and satisfaction, the Gita prescribes certain other remedies such as self-immolation and annihilation of desires for the same end. It is desire that is the source of sorrow. It is desire that causes discomfort. It is desire that makes man disconsolate and detracts from perfect peace of mind, but annihilation of desire does not mean renunciation of life as in Buddhism but rather action without hope of reward. Abandonment of life creates a new problem of inaction or doing nothing and therefore the Gita disparages such life, as such life blocks the progress of society, and people cease to be active and useful citizens and contribute nothing to society and society suffers stagnation and deterioration.

The Gita is a 'Magna Charta' of the so-called casteless section of the then society. It offered them a new hope, a fresh life and inspiration and a promise of social equality with the so-called caste section of the then society. The Gita emphatically asserts that even the casteless people can attain heaven and enjoy all the benefits resulting from the religious devotion. God created caste-system only as a device for the division of labour and efficiency of work. The Gita, as misunderstood by some, is not preaching the perpetuation of the caste-system, but the obliteration of the blot of the rigidity of the caste-system. A truly self-realized man treats a Brahmin and a Chandala alike and on a footing of equality.

The Gita preaches monotheistic belief. Lord Krishna is God Almighty and he is God and not a god. It is in the Gita, that we find a clear-cut difference between a god and God. In the Gita, we have a true revelation of religion. The religion of the Gita is a truly revealed religion.

Ever since the dawn of Creation, People have been believing in the occult powers of destiny. Any calamity, the people have attributed to the working of Fate and this belief causes submissive attitude to God. Hence in every religion the power of Fate is believed in, and this reconciles a man to his lot. The Gita gives a new meaning to the concept of fate. What is known as "Free Will" is not opposed to destiny, rather, it is a driving force to Free will. An action alone or destiny alone is not enough. One cannot guide the course of events, if it is not backed by destiny. One cannot predict the results of one's action, the results are



controlled by a power known as fate or destiny. Hence one's power is wholly and solely confined to one's action or efforts and not to results or fruit

The question as regards the date of the composition of the Gita is not yet satisfactorily solved. The Gita forms a Chapter in the Sabha-Parva of the Mahabharata. Some scholars, however, are of opinion that the Gita was composed in the times when Buddhism was in decadence. I am here advancing a novel argument that the Gita seems to have been composed during the reign of King Harshvardhana popularly known as King Harsha. The word Harsha, as it is, or in a modified form, occurs in the Gita several times. King Harsha was a great patron of learning and a promoter of both the contemporary religions namely Brahmanism and Buddhism. It is, thus possible that the literary work of the eminence of the Gita should have been written to seek his favour

## LITERARY BEAUTY OF THE BHAGAWADGITA

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**Dr. N. A. Deshpande**

The first great merit of the poem is its striking beginning. Dhritarashtra is quite naturally eager to know all about the battle. The father in him wants the Kauravas to be victorious, while the shrewd politician that he is, has judged the power and the prowess of the Pandavas well. He, therefore, is rather doubtful about the success of his sons and hence the question

Could not the Bhagawadgita have been sung without this question of Dhritrashtra? It could have well been, but then, the beginning would not have been so dramatic and so striking as it is now. Like Dhritrashtra, the reader (or the listener), is also very curious to know what has taken place on the Kurukshetra. Thus this verse 'Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre' has been very skilfully used by the author of the Bhagawadgita to make a striking beginning. As in the case of the battle, the first stroke is half of it, similarly it may be said in the case of a literary composition that a striking beginning is a fine stroke in as much as it rouses the curiosity of the reader—and this is absolutely necessary if the reader is expected to go through the composition.

Another merit—an outstanding one—of the poem is its easy flow. As we know the aim of the poem is to justify the killing of so many relatives and friends. Arjuna is unwilling to do his duty viz. killing. Krishna gives a sermon and proves the point; but when doing so, he, like a good lecturer, takes care to see that the sermon is not boring on the listener viz. Arjuna for whom it is intended.

This 'sermon' again differs from others in that it is interspersed by questions, put by Arjuna to the Lord. Had there been no such questions, the song would have been extremely monotonous and monotony is certainly a great defect in any kind of composition

Another device that is used by the Author of the Divine Song to avoid monotony is the use of different metres—e g. in the second chapter we come across verses put in different metres ( cf II 20, 22 etc. )

In addition to these merits, the poem possesses one great merit and it is what is technically called Prasada in Sanskrit. There is clarity of meaning in every verse, nay in every word that is used by the author. There are very few words in the seven hundred verses of the Gita which are difficult to be understood even by one who has been newly initiated into the study of Sanskrit. This is one of the reasons why the Bhagawadgita is so popular and why in many a home it is recited every day.

A number of Subhasitas lend charm to the poem, Subhasitas like जातस्य हि...( II-27 ), धर्म्याद्धि .. ( II-31 ), सभावितस्य ..(II-34), कृपणाः फलहेतवः. ( II-49 ), योग कर्मसु... ( II-50 ), कार्यते ह्यवश ... ( III-5 ), नियतं कुरु .. ह्यकर्मण ( III-8 ), असक्तो... ( III-19 ), यद्यदाचरति ..(III-21 ), स्वधर्मे निधनं... ( III-35 ), नाय लोको... ( IV-31 ), सर्वं कर्माखिलम्... ( VI-33 ), न हि ज्ञानेन... ( IV-38 ), आत्मवन्त न... ( IV-41 ), स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते... ( V-14 ), न हि कल्याणकृत्... ( VI-40 ), ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम्... ( VII-18 ), क्षीणे पुण्ये... ( IX-21 ), श्रेयो हि... ( XII-12 ) नियतस्य तु... ( XVIII-7 ) have become proverbial not only in Sanskrit but are also used in most of the regional languages in India

Alankaras like simile ( II-67, III-38, IV-37, VI- 34, VI-38, VII-7. ) or metaphor ( IV 36 ) are used sparingly and their place and context in the poem show that they are used just to make a point clearer. Bereft of these Alankaras the particular passages where they are used would not be easily intelligible and would not be so easily appreciated and remembered as they are now

Many definitions in the Bhagawadgita cannot be easily forgotten. They are exact, precise and full of pith and epigram

Definitions like निर्दोषं हि... ( V-19 ), य सन्यासमिति... ( V-12 ), अविभूतं क्षरो... ( VIII-4 ), य प्राप्य... ( VIII-21 ), सर्वारभपरित्यागी.. ( XII-16 ), कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे ( XIII-20 ), and यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी... ( XVIII-11 ) are a few of the many such definitions.

Beautiful descriptions like that of Arjuna's dejection in the first chapter or that of the Sthitaprajna in the second chapter or that of the Yogi in the sixth chapter add charm to the song. A careful study of these descriptions will reveal that they are coherent and consistent. One idea most naturally follows another.

Use of contradictory statements is a fine device used by the author of the Divine Song to make its reading more interesting. The expression मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि ( IX-4 ) is immediately followed by न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि ( IX-5 ) A wise person is said to be he who sees Akarma in Karma and Karma in Akarma (IV-18). The Lord asks Arjuna to see Him everywhere and to see everything in Him (IX-30). It must however be remembered that these statements are not put in just to add some kind of charm to the poem or just to make the reader or listener fumble with the meaning. They make the reader ( or listener ) think over their meaning again and again and when he once understands their meaning, the contradictions are reconciled and all his doubts about their meaning are removed.

There are a number of verses in the Bhagawadgita which possess literary charm. They are too many to be quoted here. However a few of them are cited below. नेहाभिक्रम... ( II-40 ), यावानर्थ... ( II-46 ), कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते... ( II-47 ), या निशा... ( II-69 ), न कर्मणामनारम्भात्... ( III-4 ), न बुद्धिभेदम्... ( III-26 ), यदा यदा.. ( IV-7 ), यस्य सर्वे.. ( IV-19 ), ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म... ( IV-24 ), यत्साख्यैः.. ( V-5 ), मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु.. ( VII-3 ), आब्रह्म.. ( VIII-16 ), अवजानन्ति.. ( IX- II ), पत्रं पुष्पम्.. ( XI-26 ), समदुःखसुख.. ( XIV-24 ) and श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो.. ( XVIII-47 ).

Element of Adbhuta here and there—especially in the विभूतियोग ( Chapter X ) and विश्वरूपदर्शन ( Chapter XI ) lends a charm to the song and makes it a delightful reading.

Some scholars point out that the long philosophical dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna on the morning of the first day of the Great War when both the armies are drawn in a battle-

array and hostilities are about to begin is rather incongruous and irrelevant; but once it is accepted that the Gita is a literary work this is no more a defect. On the contrary the author is to be complimented upon his making it a very fine literary composition.

A factor that lends charm to this beautiful poem is that Krishna who is to act as the charioteer of Arjuna the great warrior, becomes in short time his guide, teacher and philosopher. This change-over is so sudden and so unexpected that the reader reads in amazement what Shri Krishna preaches to his worthy disciple.

The most natural dialogue between the teacher and his disciple is another point of beauty. Arjuna quite aptly describes his dejection and when he finds that Sri Krishna is the only authority that would guide him properly, he submits himself to the Lord with the words (*shishyaste aham* II-7). How beautifully he describes his state of mind and how nicely he appeals to the greatness in the Lord !

Thus the poem possesses a number of graces. Its beautiful and grand setting, the occasion on which it is sung, the fine characterization of Arjuna, Krishna, Duryodhana and others, the element of romanticism, the contradictory statements, the pithy definitions and the epigrammatic sayings, the descriptions like those of the Sthitaprajna and the Trigunatita, the smooth changeover from one topic to another, the easy, simple and natural language, the smooth and easy flow of the poem—above all, its being sung by the Lord Himself to His most favourite disciple, all these are assets which have made it one of the best and most popular literary works, recited both by the learned as well as the laymen—for its simple and nice exposition of knotty philosophical problems by the former, and for its simplicity, lucidity and the religious merit it is supposed to give by the latter.

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## GITA-BIJA OR THE MAIN PORTION OF THE GITA \*

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**G. V. Ketkar**

The All India Hindu conference in its session at Calcutta has done well in passing a separate resolution for the spread of the Gita amongst Hindus of all sections, castes or creeds. The resolution enjoins upon every Hindu to read the second chapter of the Gita. It is a significant fact that the second chapter is instinctively selected. Every careful student of the Gita knows that the second and the third chapters are by far the most important. It would not be difficult to show by means of sound arguments that these two chapters contain the main theory of the path of Yoga in a nutshell as the idea easily suggests itself even on the first cursory reading. And if we succeed by adequate reasoning in proving beyond any shadow of doubt that these two chapters or some particular portions of them form the centre, as it were, of the whole structure of the Gita, it will be of great use to the Hindu public. The Hindu Sabhas then can unhesitatingly recommend to all Hindus that if they do not find time to read the whole of it, they must at least read and recite that particular portion which forms its centre.

The practicability of this idea, prompted the writer of this article to make some endeavours in that direction. He has already placed the results of his endeavours before the Marathi knowing public in the form of a small book called 'गीताबीज' or the 'Seed of the Gita' and the book has received some little attention from the students of the Gita in Maharashtra. The resolution of the

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Hindu Maha sabha prompts him to place his views before men from other provinces who do not know Marathi. He is doing it in the hope that it will help the cause of the spread of the Gita.

Hitherto, many summaries and selections of the Gita in 10 or 100 or more verses, have been published. But we find that in all of them the reasons for selection of those particular verses are not given. It depends much upon instinctive selection, so that these selections may differ according to every one's inclination. But the method of selection followed in the "Gita-Bija" is a logical one. I have tried to prove that the 66 verses, from the 39th verse in the 2nd chapter to the 32nd verse in the 3rd chapter, form the central portion of the Gita and in them we find the teaching of Sri Krishna in a nutshell.

This does not mean that the rest of the Gita does not contain teachings of Sri Krishna, or that all other verses except these 66 are interpolations. Far from that the rest of the Gita contains explanations, amplification, re-statement, elucidation etc., of the principles that are enunciated in these 66 verses. Therefore they are called "Gita-Bija" in order to bring out clearly that they form the "seed" while the rest of the Gita is the tree that naturally grows out of the seed.

Again it must be made clear that selecting the main portion from the Gita, is not in any way new or contrary to orthodox practice. The great Shankaracharya selects only 628 verses as forming the main portion of Gitashastra. He leaves out the first 57 verses from his commentary as introductory verses and begins from the 11th verse in the second chapter. He leaves out the last 15 verses from the 18th chapter and regards 63rd verse of that chapter as the end of the main portion. It is therefore on that verse that he has written the concluding review उपसंहार of his commentary.

The arguments on which "Gita-Bija" or the selection of 66 verses is based, are as follows —(1) The Gita is a dialogue between the Master and the disciple. The disciple comes forward with a particular dilemma in life. He wants a clear solution. The Master not only solves that particular question but gives in a general way the whole theory of determining right and wrong actions in life. It is but natural that in such a dialogue the Master should first in a nut-shell enunciate his theory very briefly, leaving

it to the disciple to know further details of it by means of asking his difficulties and questions गीताबीज must therefore be searched somewhere in the beginning of the book rather than at the end of it

(2) It is admitted by almost all the commentators that Gita-shastra or the main theoretical portion of the Gita begins from the 11th verse of the 2nd chapter

(3) Then look at the first three verses of the 4th chapter :—

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।  
 विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह मनुर्िक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥  
 एवं परपराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।  
 स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परतप ॥ २ ॥  
 स एवाऽयं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।  
 भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

Dr. Beasant translates these verses as follows :—

“ This imperishable yoga I declared to Vivaswan; Vivaswan taught it to Manu, Manu told it to Ikshwaku (1). This handed on, down the lines, the king-sages knew. This yoga by great efflux of time decayed in the world O Parantapa (2) This same ancient Yoga hath been declared to thee by me, for thou art My devotee and My friend; it is the Supreme Secret (3). ”

The Gita is described as ‘ Yogashastra ’ or science of yoga at the end of every chapter. The word *proktah* indicates past tense. “ This same ancient Yoga hath been today declared by Me. ” Remember that these words come at the beginning of the 4th chapter. Does it not clearly show that the Yoga hath been declared in the second and the third chapters ? Does it follow that the main portion of the Gita lies somewhere between the 11th verse of the second chapter ( which is admittedly the beginning of Gitashastra ) on the one hand, and the last verse of the 3rd chapter on the other ? The second chapter contains 72 verses and the third contains 43. Deducting the first ten from the second chapter, we get in all  $62 + 43 = 105$  verses, which must contain the main theory of Shri Krishna’s Path of Yoga

(4) These three verses describe the history or परपरा of Yoga. One turns to the history of a theory only when the theory is first enunciated and not before that. That is the natural and



the usual course The appearance of history in the beginning of the 4th chapter only shows that a short enunciation of the theory of Yoga is already completed in the third chapter.

(5) Then look at the commentary of Sri Shankaracharya on the 1st verse of the 4th chapter. It is as follows :—

“ योऽयं योगोऽध्यायद्वयेनोक्तो, ज्ञाननिष्ठालक्षणः स सन्ध्याय  
कर्मयोगोपायः यस्मिन्वेदार्थः परिसमाप्तः प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो निवृत्ति-  
लक्षणश्च । गीतासु च सर्वासु अयमेव योगो विवक्षितो भगवता ।  
अतः परिसमाप्तं वेदार्थं मन्वानं तं वशकथनेन स्तौति भगवान् । ”

This commentary clearly states that (1) The whole theory of Yoga is completed in the 2nd and 3rd chapters (2) That the same Yoga is further described in the remaining chapters and (3) that Sri Krishna, thinking that the enunciation of his theory is complete turns to the historical aspect of the question Commenting upon this verse Lok Tilak writes in his Gita-Rahasya, “ Sri Krishna tells here the ancient ancestry ( गुरुपरंपरा ) of his path, lest Arjuna should suspect that this faith and this way of life is an innovation meant for the purpose of encouraging him ( Arjuna ) to fight the battle. ( p. 664 ) ”

(6) The writer will be content if all students of the Gita accept that these 105 verses contain the main theory of the Gita. But he carries his examination still further Look at the 31st and 32nd verses of the 3rd chapter—

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवा  
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥३१॥  
ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम्  
सर्वज्ञानविमूढास्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥३२॥

This is Dr Beasant's translation of them—“Who abide ever in this teaching of Mine, full of faith and free from cavilling, they too are released from actions (31) Who carp at my teaching and act not thereon, senseless, deluded in all knowledge, know thou these mindless ones as fated to be destroyed (32) ”

In these two verses Sri Krishna describes the fate of those who follow his path and also of those who do not follow it Such a statement is possible only when the path is first clearly described ‘ me idam matam ’—“This teaching of mine”—these words show

that Sri Krishna refers to the preceding verses as containing a complete enunciation of his teaching. Lokmanya Tilak in his Gita-Rahasya calls these two verses as 'अन्वय-व्यतिरेक फलश्रुति' i.e. a positive and negative statement of the fruit. Every Hindu conversant with sacred books, knows that the Phalashruti comes as a rule at the end and after the completion of the book. The appearance of Phalashruti in the middle of a book can only be explained by the fact that it comes after the first brief statement of the theory.

(7) Shraddha and Anasuya—faith and honesty—are the two essential qualifications, which the follower of a Yoga, must possess. This forms, as it were, the twofold entrance examination, without which no one is admitted in the temple of the Gita. Now it is remarkable that the mention of this 'entrance examination' is to be found at the end of the book also. Look at the 71st verse in the 18th chapter

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।

सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाल्लोकान् प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥७१॥

It is translated as follows :—

“The man, who full of faith, merely heareth unreviling, even he, freed from evil, obtaineth the radiant worlds of the righteous.”

The same essential qualification is indicated in the second line of the 67th verse in the 18th chapter—

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मा योऽभ्यसूयति ।

“Never is this (teaching) to be spoken by thee to one, who desireth not to listen, nor yet to him, who speaketh evil of Me.”

This essential twofold qualification appears nowhere in the book except in the 31st verse of the 3rd chapter and the 67th and 71st verse of the 18th chapter

It is thus clear that this qualification which is stated at the end of the main portion is repeated only at the end of the book. This lends much support to the above argument

(8) The Phalashruti is in the 31st and 32nd verse of the 3rd chapter, which contains in all 43 verses. The Parampara or history comes in the beginning of the 4th chapter. Can the last 11 verses at the end of the 3rd chapter be excluded from the

main portion only because they come after the Phalashruti? No; there are other reasons also First take the group of 8 verses at the end of the 3rd chapter. It begins with the 36th verse in which Arjuna inquires about the origin of the sin.

Sri Shankaracharya introduces the 36th verse with the following commentary

“ यद्यप्यनर्थमूलं ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसो रागद्वेषौ ह्यस्य  
परिपन्थिनाविति चोक्तं, विक्षिप्तमनवधारितं च तदुक्तं  
तत्संक्षिप्तं निश्चितं चेदमेवेच्छन्नर्जुन उवाच ”

It is clear from this, that the seven verses, that follow only repeat what is already said before This portion can therefore be cut off as being redundant Then the other three verses namely 33rd, 34th and 35th only show the reason why people do not follow the path These verses can therefore be excluded from the main portion which describes the path itself Sri Shankaracharya introduces the 33rd verse with the following commentary

“ कस्मात् पुनः कारणात् त्वदीयं मतं नानुतिष्ठन्ति परधर्माननुतिष्ठन्ति  
स्वधर्मान्निनुवर्तन्ते त्वत्प्रतिकूला कथं न विभ्यति, त्वच्छासनातिव्रम-  
दोषात्कथं न विभ्यति ”

Verses which describe the cause why people do not follow the path can be omitted safely from the portion which describes the path itself

(9) Thus excluding the last 11 verses of the 3rd chapter we get 94 verses—62 in the second and 32 in the 3rd chapter. Now the path is described as “ इमं योग ”—“ This Yoga ” in the first verse of the 4th chapter. Let us see from where the description of “ इमं योग ”—‘ this Yoga ’ begins Look at the 39th verse in the 2nd chapter It is as follows

एषा तेऽभिहिता साख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमा शृणु ।  
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ ३९ ॥

It is translated as follows —

“ This teaching set forth to thee is in accordance with the Samkhya, hear it now according to Yoga, imbued with which teaching, O Partha, thou shalt cast away bonds of action ” It must be noted that the word ‘ yogam ’ appears first in this verse The

verse shows clearly that the enunciation of 'yoga' begins from here. That the path of Sri Krishna is Yoga and nothing else, is clear from the word 'yogashastri' at the end of each chapter and 'Imam yogam' in the first verse of the 4th chapter.

The same thing will also be clear from the words of Sanjaya at the end—

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद् गुह्यमह परम्

योग योगेश्वरात् कृष्णात्साक्षात् कथयतः स्वयम् ॥ ७५ ॥

“ By the favour of Vyasa I listened to this secret and supreme Yoga from the Lord of Yoga, Krishna himself speaking before mine eyes ” In the last verse Sanjaya again calls Krishna as 'Yogeshwara' or Lord of Yoga Therefore the writer contends that the main portion of the Bhagawadgita begins with the 39th verse of the 2nd chapter and ends with the 32nd verse of the 3rd chapter—in all 66 verses In order to make this portion separately recitable, the writer would suggest that a usual prayer or 'Namana' may be added at the beginning in some such form as

नारायण नमस्कृत्य नर चैव नरोत्तमम् ।

देवी सरस्वती व्यास ततो बीजमुदीरयेत् ॥

(10) This small Adhikarana or portion of 66 verses begins with 'Karmabandham prahasyasi'.—"Thou shalt cast away the bonds of action" and ends with 'muchyante te api karmabhih' i.e. "they too are released from actions" The beginning and the end *upakrama* and *upasamhara* or if we may say so *Pratijna* and *Nigamana* agree with each other—making it a complete whole The 40th verse in the 3rd chapter marks unmistakably the introduction or the description of this Yoga The verse runs as follows :

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ ४० ॥

“ In this there is no loss of effort, nor is there transgression. Even a little of this knowledge protects from great fear ”

The 30th verse of the 3rd chapter forms a fitting summing up of the whole

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ॥

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३० ॥

“ Surrendering all actions to me, with the thoughts resting on the supreme self, from hope and egoism freed and of mental fever cured, engage in a battle ”

(11) Let us now see whether we can adduce some other reason for omitting the verses from 11th to 38th verse of the 2nd chapter from this “ Gita-Bija ” of 66 verses. Arjuna’s mentality at the beginning contained two elements viz thought and sentiment.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभाव·  
पृच्छामि त्वा धर्मसमूहचेताः ।  
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चित ब्रूहि तन्मे  
जिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मा त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥

“ My heart is weighed down with the vice of faintness, my mind is confused as to duty I ask thee which may be the better—that tell me decisively I am thy disciple, suppliant to thee, teach me ”

The sentiment of faintness, Karpanya or Shoka was only temporary. But the ‘ Dharmasammoha ’—‘ confusion of duty was deeper than that The main purpose of the Gita is to remove this conflict of duty For at the end of the book Arjuna says .—

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।  
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ ७३ ॥

“ Destroyed is my delusion. I have gained knowledge through thy grace, O Immutable one I am firm, my doubts have fled away I will do according to thy word ”

This shows that the main purpose of the Gita is to remove the conflict of duty in the mind of Arjuna His Shoka was only a temporary feeling It is clear from the words like ‘ na vikampitumarhasi ’, ‘ na tvam shocitumarhasi ’, which occur so many times in the verses 11 to 38 in the second chapter, that this portion of 28 verses is devoted mainly to remove the feeling of pity (shoka) which is only temporary The main purpose of removing the Sammoha or conflict of duty begins from the 39th verse of the 2nd chapter, after which such words as ‘ na vikampitumarhasi ’ are conspicuous by their absence

Thus we see that the main portion of the Gita enunciating the theory of Yoga, begins from the 39th verse in the 2nd chapter and ends with the 32nd verse in the 3rd chapter.

I warn again the readers not to misunderstand me. I do not mean to say that the rest of the Gita is useless, or is interpolated or that it does not describe the same "Yoga" in further details. I would be too glad if all Hindus daily recite all the 700 verses. But if they do not find time enough to do that, my contentino is that they should at least recite the 66 verses, which form the "Gita-Bija". I hope I have made a sufficiently strong case for this selection. I have seen no other selection based on equally sound reasoning. All available selections are only results of individual discretion or inclination. I would again be too glad if any student on the Gita points out any flaws in my reasoning. I would be ready to re-examine the process of selection in that light. But I hope that, considering the importance of the problem to all Hindus who regard the Gita as one common paramount gospel, all students of the Gita will try to understand my reasoning and examine it with care. That is the only reward I crave for this small endeavour.

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## GITA—A CLARION CALL TO CO-OPERATION

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**G. H. Kunte**

The Bhagwadgita embodies the Science of Life. It is a veritable mine of instructions applicable and helpful in different situations in life. Of course there is a logical connection between them all, but it is hardly apparent on the surface and they therefore appear very disjointed and unrelated with one another. People praise it to the skies but do not live the precepts. Otherwise the world would present a different scene altogether. The fact is that there are but a few who have learnt from bitter experience that their selfish and self-made theories of life do not lead them to the desired goal. All that is due to a lack of clear thinking and negligence to observe the facts of life. A man may start from himself and observe the many things that he uses daily and cannot do without. There is an innate feeling in every man about his own importance in the scheme of things, and yet despite this feeling, if he were to think, he will find that by himself he is unable to create any one of the things he uses. Take the case of the shirt that he wears. Let him see how many people have laboured and worked to make that little article of dress for him. Some one has tilled the soil and cleared it of weeds, not by himself again, but with the labour of oxen, and the carpenter who made the plough, and the rope-maker who made the ropes, the blacksmith who provided the pieces of iron, etc etc; then with the help from nature in the shape of soil, air, moisture, varying temperatures and perhaps the unrecognised aid of nature spirits, the seed sown has grown into a cotton-plant and provided cotton which has been gathered and stored and sold again and again until it reaches the spinner and the weaver to take

shape as cloth and lastly the tailor has given it the form of a shirt. The co-operation of so many men, and even animals, has been necessary. The number of men, and animals also, who contribute their share of labour and work involved in the production of the many things that every man uses is well nigh incalculable. Nor is the number restricted only to the country or nation or caste or colour to which a man belongs. His debt is world-wide. If this simple fact were considered, you would see the truth of what is declared in the Gita, Chapter III, verse 10—सह्यज्ञा प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा etc., usually the word used in English is "Sacrifice". The word has associated with it a feeling of pain, बलिदान which is absent in the original Sanskrit word. None need therefore quarrel with the use of the word co-operation to bring out the intended sense. Anybody who fails to be a link in this chain of co-operation (evam pravartitam cakram) not only liveth in vain, but is a source of trouble and pain and sorrow primarily to himself and incidentally to others for it increases their shares of labour and work. Willing co-operation and that too because we have understood the Plan, brings freedom. Otherwise all beings revolve as though mounted on a machine by His Illusion, Power or Maya (Gita, Chapter XVIII, verse 61.)

This simple fact of co-operation is ever present in our life, but we are apt to consider it in compartments, like my family, my group, my State, my nation, etc. laying emphasis on the little self. Few there will be who can say 'my world'. Fewer still who can say स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम्. Co-operation in action means harmony and prosperity for all, not only for a few or the majority, but for all. A thinking man may rediscover for himself all the truths embodied in the verses of the Gita if he but opens his eyes to the facts all round him.

Co-operation is the utilisation of one's powers and capacities, be they small or great, for the benefit of all. Gita wants us to live a natural life of co-operation ensuring happiness and prosperity for all thus making of this earth a heaven where all desires are fulfilled.

Co-operation, therefore, is the clarion call of the Gita. Let him, who has ears, hear



## VISHVARUPADARSHANA OF THE GITA

K. M. Bedekar

विश्वतश्चक्षुरुत विश्वतोमुखो विश्वतोबाहुस्त विश्वतस्पात् ।  
 स बाहुभ्या धमति स पतत्रैर्द्यवाभूमी जनयन्देव एक ॥  
 श्वेताश्वेतरोपनिपत् ॥ ३-३ ॥

To experience the God i. e. Ishwara in the Universe, as Vishvarupa, is the special teaching of the Bhagawadgita. The Universe has emanated from Him, and He is immanent in it. The Universe is His Rupa, it is the manifestation of his Shakti the Maya-shakti. What we see or experience are the qualities of a thing and not its substance. We cannot see fire apart from its heat and light. We give the name fire to what we understand after seeing and experiencing the qualities, the external aspect of fire. So we can form an idea of God (Ishwara) on understanding what the Universe (Vishva) is, how it is constituted and how it exists.

The Universe is created by Him, and in a sense, He is the Universe. It is not created, or made like a jar by a potter, it is the manifestation of His Power, of His free will, his Svatantrya. We create our own world in a dream out of nothing almost, out of no tangible material. To us that creation is real, so long as the dream lasts. In the same way this Vishva is God's creation, and to us who are just His shadow, His reflections, His *amsha*, this is real, this is true.

What is the Universe like? Is it material or is it spiritual (immaterial)? Is it a mere phantom, a shadow, a dream? The Gita says it is the 'Rupa' of God and is real. It consists of

qualities which are perceivable by the senses, but is there any substance behind these qualities ? This question has been answered by various seers in various ways. For the common man there is a substance behind these qualities, and an enduring substance too. For the ordinary thinker, the 'Vishva' is real, as he himself is real. The panorama passing before his eyes, changing from moment to moment, is real. Life itself will be impossible, if it be not so.

This 'Vishva' is without a beginning, and without an end. It being the 'Rupa' of God, is real, as real as the Atman which is experiencing it, and as real and enduring as the 'Paramatman' who can be seen in it. The Universe ( विश्व ) is universal and all-abiding ( Nitya ) in which 'Jagat' has a changing perpetuity ( Pravahika Nityatva ). This is not created from moment to moment, it evolves, evolution and devolution is going on from moment to moment. Nothing is created anew, nothing is destroyed; there is dissolution, but no destruction. The Law of conservation of matter so to say is indisputable. The world i.e. Jagat is that aspect of the Universe ( Vishva ) with which the Atman has to deal from moment to moment and from day to day in life. The whole world does not, may not affect his life, or his conduct in life, but he is aware of it, he is in it, and is of it.

Inside this changing world is the Samsara of Jiva. His relationships ( things which affect his daily life, and which make him happy or otherwise ) constitute the only actuality that affects him, which moulds him, and which is the only reality for him. But this is just what is unreal, his own creation, which he is never prepared to understand rightly. He is in the world because of this, it is his life; he is incapable of viewing it objectively, and finding out for himself what its true nature is. His mind, his intellect, his reason are cast in that mould, and he cannot get out of it. It is his nature ( Svabhava ), his I-ness, his very being.

The changing world—changing for the जीवात्मा and his नानार ( relationships ) are not the Universe ( विश्व ). They are created, conceived by the जीव not by the विश्वेश्वर. The nature of the Universe ( विश्व ) is universal not particular विश्व is नानान्य not विशेष. It is not changing, not moving—where can it move ? The change is for the Jivatman conceived by him. अतो न

individual Jivatman has no value from the point of view of the changing, evolving जगत्. For this change or evolution, and devolution or dissolution time (काल) is responsible. In between the evolution and devolution the momentary expression or manifestation gives the idea of continuity of existence, which is the changing जगत्. The Universe does not change, it is a reality; the individuals, the particulars are only the passing phases.

जीवत्व changes and experiences transmigration, but the आत्मा does not change. आत्मा is one (एक) and unchanging (नित्य). The individualized (सङ्कुचित) आत्मा considers himself limited (अपूर्णम् मन्यमान) and takes a limited view of the Universe (विश्व) and thinks himself happy or otherwise on account of the limits he puts upon himself and his own power. He is गुद्व, बुद्ध स्वतन्त्र and आनन्दस्वरूप (all bliss), but by his own limitations, which are unreal, he thinks himself otherwise. He is free but considers himself entangled (बद्ध) in ससार. He also thinks himself happy by small gains, and again unhappy with small, unreal losses. In fact, there are neither losses nor gains except as are conceived by his limited understanding from day to day and from moment to moment of his life.

God's विश्व is infinite. There is only विश्व, nothing else; nothing beyond. And this विश्व is the रूप of the विश्वेश्वर पूर्णम् इदम् पूर्णम् अदः, this विश्व is whole and infinite and He whose manifestation it is, is also one and infinite. Infinite is without a limit in both largeness and smallness. Nothing is beyond, nothing is inside even the smallest particle, however small, except the God, his power, his manifestation, his greatness.

This is विश्व the understanding of which will depend upon the knowledge one can have of the Universe from books, from what one can learn from those who know, and above all from one's own intelligent thinking. For some, the Universe may be extending far beyond five thousand million light years, for others it may be only as large as the starry heavens visible to the naked eye, but no one can say, or imagine how very large it really is. To the ignorant it may be only as large as his daily routine and his limited interests allow him to imagine.

Every one knows, or is conscious of One's I-ness, everything in the world one understands in the light of this I-ness. This is अहत्व, this is जीवत्व. Behind this, and as a basis for this अहत्व is

आत्मत्व, the limited आत्मा is an अंश (a shadow, a reflection) of the परमात्मा. The परमात्मा, the ज्ञानात्मा the अतरात्मा and the आत्मा or जीवात्मा. This is the order in which the Ultimate may be viewed down to the limited, the individual entity. All this is परमात्मा. The objective world is the मेय i.e. cognizable, cognition is मान and मातृ is the one who cognizes, the individual जीवात्मा. This cognition is consciousness (सवित्). There is no cognizable world apart from the जीव who cognizes, as there is only one तत्त्व (that-ness), without a second. जीव is of the विश्व and in the विश्व of which it is conscious. To cognize the विश्व or the जगत् is to be aware of it. For knowledge, there is the knower and the thing known, but जीव the knower is all the three in one.

आत्मा is not different from परमात्मा—‘उपद्रष्टानुमन्ताच्च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वर । परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुष पर ॥ १३-२२॥’

The क्षरपुरुष (पुर्यष्टक) and the अक्षरपुरुष (जीवभूता परा प्रकृति) in the universe constitute the विश्व which is the manifest रूप of the विश्वात्मा-विश्वाकृति-विश्वमय-विश्वेश्वर. The विश्वोत्तीर्ण-पुरोत्तम-परमेश्वर is the transcendental aspect of the परमतत्त्व beyond this, but not different from, or away from this.

अनाद्यनन्त कलिलस्य मध्ये विश्वस्य स्रष्टारमनेकरूपम् ।

विश्वस्यैक परिवेष्टितार ज्ञात्वा देव मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

( श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषत् ५।१३ )

‘चिन्मयोऽपि जगन्मूर्त्या इयानो य स जयत्यज. ।

स्वात्मप्रच्छादनक्रीडाविदग्ध परमेश्वर. ॥

such is परमतत्त्व which can be seen in the विश्व only with the दिव्यचक्षु or ज्ञानचक्षु. It is not the gross, material, phenomenal aspect which is the विश्वरूप. It is the unchanging (नित्य) aspect which is His रूप. It can be understood by seeing beyond His माया (His Power to be many and to multiply).

माया तु प्रकृति विद्यात् मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।

तस्यावयवभूतैस्तु व्याप्त सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥

( श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषत् ४।१० )

परमं यत्स्वातन्त्र्यं दुर्घटसंपादनं महेश्वरम् ।

देवी मायाशक्तिः स्वात्मावरणं जिह्रस्यैनम् ॥

( परमानन्दमार १५ )

This माया is ऐश्वरी शक्ति, it is not अज्ञान अज्ञान can be attributed to जीव not to ईश्वर. Also माया is real, not unreal.

श्रीकृष्ण showed to अर्जुन his विश्वरूप which could be seen only with the eye of intellect, with the ज्ञानचक्षु not with the चर्मचक्षु This विश्वरूप is सच्चिदानन्दरूप The विश्वोत्तीर्ण is beyond रूप विश्व is सत्, not असत्. It is real, not unreal. It is not a hallucination It is not a भ्रम It is not like रज्जुसर्प or like शुक्तिरजत It can be said to be of the nature of सुवर्णालंकार The ornament is real it is gold The विश्वात्मा-विश्वेश्वर becomes manifest in Himself as the Universe ( विश्व ), and also outside in Himself

‘ तेन सवित्तिमुकुरे विश्वमात्मानमर्पयत् ।

नाथस्य वदतेऽमुष्य विमला विश्वरूपताम् ॥ ’ ( तन्त्रालोक ३।४४ )

मया ततमिद सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ गीता. ९-४ ॥

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।

भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावन ॥ गीता. ९-५ ॥

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान् ।

तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ गीता. ९-६ ॥

As the विश्व is सद्रूप, so it is चिद्रूप and आनन्दरूप also The चिन्मात्र is this चैतन्यभूतजगत्. आत्मा the अक्ष of परमात्मा sees his own world in himself Every जीव sees its own world round about itself The aggregate of all these seeings of individuals ( व्यष्टि ) is the विश्व of the ईश्वर ( समष्टि ). The whole विश्व is चैतन्यरूप, nothing is अचेतन. There is life pervading the whole Universe in some form or other. There is nothing like dead matter. Every where there is स्पन्द—the pulsation of God’s power Modern Physics has very effectively demonstrated this Matter which is made up of atoms, is vibrating, pulsating The whole Universe is चैतन्यभूत; nothing can be called dead

The Universe is also आनन्दरूप, it is not दुःखरूप or सुखरूप. सुख is only the opposite of दुःख, it is not आनन्द आनन्द is beyond सुख दुःख There is also no Vaisamya, no wrong, no inequity, no injustice in Vishva Also there is no नैर्घृण्य, no cruelty in God’s creation Man imputes to himself undeserving importance, and thinks that the Jagat is for him, and when he finds

conditions or objects unfavourable to his own interests and desires. he finds fault with God's creation. But this world is for all creatures of God, and for all that constitutes it; it is as much for the snake and tiger, as it is for man, and for all the living creatures whom man considers innocent, or subservient to him. The creation is the manifestation of God's delight or pleasure ( लीला ), if at all we can give some reason for it. But where is the need for giving a reason? The Universe is, that is enough! It was not *created* at any *time*. It is not bound by *time*. It is beyond time, and beyond any considerations of space also. Time and space are both infinite. We can approximate to the idea of what is infinite, but reason cannot encompass it. It's God's wish ( इच्छा ) to know ( ज्ञान ) and to manifest ( क्रिया ) which is this Universe

न तस्य कार्यं करणं च विद्यते न तत्समश्चाभ्याधिकश्च दृश्यते ।

पराऽस्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च ।

( श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषत् ६-८ )

निर्मले मुकुरे यद्वद्भान्ति भूमिजलादयः ।

अमिश्रास्तद्वदेकस्मिन्निश्चिन्नाथे विश्ववृत्तयः ॥ ( तन्त्रालोक ३/४ )

The Universe is neither static nor dynamic, it simply is.

This Vishva is wonderful, and still more wonderful is he who sees it, experiences it, enjoys it. He is Jivatman the non-dying ( Nitya ) miniature cast or image ( Amsha ) of Paramatman for whom this Vishva is a reality. In this he visualizes his own world ( i. e Jagat ) and his own Samsara and is happy to be in it. Happiness i. e Ananda is his real nature *sva-bhava*. But he thinks himself unhappy when he does not find things to his own mind, or does not find them happening to suit his desire. He is one of the infinite number of such Jivas, the aggregate of whose worlds is God's creation. Interests are bound to clash, and also often times to coalesce, which give rise to unhappiness, and happiness in life. What the other Jivas large and small, feel we cannot imagine, but probably their pleasures and griefs are limited to their bodily necessities. It is only man, who thinks himself happy and elated when his desires are met and miserable and unhappy when his desires are thwarted or are unfulfilled. Control of desires is, therefore, the remedy against this unhappi-

ness Unhampcred fulfilment of desires only whets his passions, and makes him more and more greedily and consequently unhappy.

योगेश्वर श्रीकृष्ण showed himself to अर्जुन as विश्वरूप and said नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया । न च एवविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यदा ॥ गीता ११-५४ ॥ Not by the study of Vedas, not by austerity, not by charity, not by sacrifices will it be possible to see Ishwara as Visvarupa, but भक्त्या त्वनन्यया ज्ञायोऽहमेवविधोऽर्जुन । ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परतप ॥ गीता ११-५४ ॥ It is only by Bhakti and by Ananyabhakti that He can be seen, known and realised, as विश्वमूर्ति-विश्वाकार-विश्वमय. Bhakti is अनन्यता, तत्परायणा, तदस्यता and तादात्म्य. Oneness with Him is Bhakti. There is no real Bhakti unless the relation between Bhakta and Deva, Sevaka, and Svamin ceases, and Bhakta becomes the Deva

ना समोर दिसे शिवुहि । परि देखिले काही नाही ।

देव भक्ता दोही । एकचि पाडु ॥ अनुभवामृत ९-५६ ॥

To know him is to be one with Him This knowing is not objective Objective knowledge is an acquisition, an acquirement but this will not touch the innermost recesses of the heart (Antaranga) unless there is complete resignation to His will and unless one's identity is completely and wholly submerged in the परमतत्त्व.

This is Yoga Buddhiyoga, the central teaching of the Bhagawadgita. Karma, Jnana, Dhyana all should culminate in Bhakti (Tadatmya) Any feeling of separateness (duality) is not Bhakti one's interests, desires and even one's identity must be completely and wholly eliminated, and one must forget one's very individuality to be a Bhakta God's will (ईश्वरेच्छा) and nothing else should prevail, and then the Bhakta will himself be God.

To see and to know the विश्वरूप ईश्वर and to experience oneness with Him is the अनुभवामृत which the Bhakta will attain when he will forget his own individuality, his particularity, his very identity, and will himself become Vishva (all).

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मान सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शन ॥ गीता ६-२९ ॥

‘One who sees himself in Vishva, and also sees Vishva in himself, who sees all things with the eye of sameness’, such a Yogin sees Ishwara every where, and experiences every thing as being in Ishwara,

does not feel himself separate from Him, and Ishwara also takes him in Himself as His own. Anubhava (experience) is to be 'that', to be one with the experienced, to completely forget one's identity.

आणि मुक्त मुमुक्षु बद्ध । हे तववरी योग्यताभेद ।

अनुभवाभूतस्वादा विरुद्ध जव ।

गगावगाहना आली । पाणिये गंगा झाली ।

का तिमिरे भेटली । सूर्या जैशी ' ॥

( अनुभवामृत १० २५-२६ )

‘ पुरुष एवेद सर्वं यदभूत यच्च भव्य । उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ॥  
एतावानस्य महिमा अतो ज्यायाश्च पुरुष ॥ ’

All this whatever has come to be and whatever will become henceforth is Purusa, He is the Ruler of heaven ( Moksa ) and earth ( whatever lives and grows by food ) Such is His greatness ( His Power ). He is even greater विश्वेश्वर is विश्वात्मा and is also विश्वोत्तीर्ण. He is the Pramata who by his wish ( इच्छामात्रेण ) brings this Vishva into being

तत्तान्तर्विश्वमिद विचित्रतनुकरणभुवनसन्तानम् ।

मोक्ता च तत्र देही शिव एव गृहीतपशुभावः ॥

नानाविधवर्णाना रूपं धत्ते यथाऽमलस्फटिक ।

सुरमानुषपशुपादपरूपत्व तद्वदीशोऽति ॥

( परमार्थसार ५ , ६, )

The millions and millions of worlds, the hundreds of millions of stars and the millions and millions of galaxies are all the Vishva which the Vishveshwara is. Human imagination cannot fathom the greatness of this Vishva. Here we see सर्ग-स्थिति-संहार creation-manifestation-dissolution ( withdrawal ) going on incessantly, without a moment's pause, of this phenomenal Jagat, which is constantly moving; everything, we ourselves, are moving or rather appear to be moving. In fact there can be no movement, where will it move, where can it go ? In this the dissolution ( संहार ) shows itself most strikingly, as this affects our lives, and it is therefore shown prominently in the विश्वरूप shown to Arjuna ( कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृन् प्रवृद्धो ). The time element is most important in our lives. To understand विश्वरूप the कालरूप has to be properly comprehended. काल brings



the world into being, and showing it for a moment, takes it to dissolution. The succession of events gives it the form of continuity.

मूर्तिवैचित्र्यतो देशक्रममाभासयत्यसौ ।

क्रियावैचित्र्यनिर्भासात् कालक्रममपीश्वरः ॥

( ईश्वरप्रत्यभिज्ञा २।१।५ )

The Bhakta who dedicates his activities to the purpose, and to the will of God ( who works as does the God for the protection of the good, and for abolition of evil ), who holds the God as the supreme, the ultimate, the everything in life, who does not get himself entangled in any affairs of life, and who has no enmity towards any creature ( who has love and kindness for all )—such a one comes to me ( the Supreme ) says the Bhagavan. This is the moral of विश्वरूपदर्शन.

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैर सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ गीता. ११-५५ ॥

Bhakti is oneness with God, unattachment and love for all creatures

The importance of Bhakti is mainly emphasized here. Bhakti is Yoga par excellence, and Yoga i c Buddhiyoga is the fundamental teaching of the Bhagawadgita, which is summarized thus.

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मा तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्ब्रह्मपाश्रयः ।

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि सन्त्यस्य मत्परः ।

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चिन्तः सततं भव ॥

( गीता. १८-५५, ५६, ५७ )

The Bhakta (being one with God) knows Him in the true sense—knows His greatness ( Mahatmya ), knows intrinsically and essentially what He is—and knowing him thus, becomes merged in Him afterwards He who has completely resigned himself to God, even if he be engaged in all activities, attains the everlasting and immutable status by His grace. By dedicating all

his activities to God, and believing by firm conviction that God is the end-all and be-all of life, the Bhakta completely relying on Buddhiyoga, should always keep the God in mind unswervingly.

This is the essence of the teaching of the Bhagawadgita and for this the foundation is laid in the Adhyaya on विश्वरूपदर्शन. He is in the heart of every body, one need not go far to seek him. He is to be seen in every day life and in all activities of the Giva. For Him there is no high and low, no far and near. He is equally represented in the lowest of the low (as we may choose to imagine) and in the highest of the high in life. He is everywhere and He is every thing. There is nothing else but God. the Vishva is just His Rupa.

‘ इति शम् ’

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Shrimad Bhagawadgita is a unique and exceptional religious book, because it is acclaimed as such by world-thinkers and saviours irrespective of faiths and civilisations to which they belong, by saints, poets and philosophers alike. Its uniqueness consists in its approach of synthesis, integration, balanced view and acceptance of truth from every source and viewpoint. Therein lies its importance which is par excellence and its irresistible appeal to every human heart that craves for sanity, simplicity and reasonableness. Instinct and reason are reconciled in it. The difference between priori and a-priori vanishes here. Its hold on human mind dates from prehistoric period and it not only continues unabated but increases as decades roll on.

Even though Moksa is accepted as the highest aspiration and human endeavour, 'Dharma', 'Artha' and 'Kama' have been given their legitimate place in human life. They are not neglected but purified and reconciled with 'Moksha' the clue of which one gets in धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि. But as regards the goal of attainment there is practically no controversy. All accept 'Moksa' as the goal in some form or the other. Real difficulty and controversy is regarding the means of attainment. Naturally Jnana, Karma and Bhakti are the most prominent—amongst them though the number can be increased by adding Yoga, Dhyana, Japa, Tapas, Svadhyaya, Cittashuddhi, Gunavikasa and others. The protagonists of these can be grouped under three categories. First come Kevalavadins or the exclusionists. They maintain that Moksa can be attained by one means only to the

exclusion of others. Some would insist on Jnana, some on Karma and others on Bhakti but they agree that one means will have to be selected to the exclusion of others. The second category consists of Samucchayavadins. They maintain that the highest attainment is possible only by the combination of three means and not by any single means. The third group is of those who are called Abhedavadins. They maintain that the three principal means are not separate entities but they culminate in one. Ultimately they cannot be differentiated. The Gita favours the third group by stating एक साध्य च योग च etc. A fourth group has also come up, which accepts the Abhedha but still prefers to call it by some conventional name. But theoretically the fourth group should be included in the third.

But this unique synthetic approach or समन्वयपद्धति of the Gita does not stop here. On the same lines some are now coming forward to say that एक ब्रह्म च शून्य च and that Vedic Dharma and Bauddha Dharma can be reconciled. सर्वधर्मसमभाव or fundamental unity of all religions is almost accepted though some prefer to differ. These later developments are, in my personal opinion, in consonance with the spirit of the Gita

Leaving aside the philosophy and approach to life advocated by the Gita, unique though they are, its real usefulness is in its applicability to every problem on human life. The Gita offers solution to every human problem indeed. Once in our discussion I put a question to a revered and elderly person to suggest a programme for me. And to my astonishment the reply came:—

सतत कीर्तयन्तो मा यतन्तश्च दृढव्रता ।

नमस्यन्तश्च मा भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ ९-१४ ॥

He added, 'this offers you a practical programme that will last for life'. Since then the श्लोक was as if carved on my mind and has convinced me that the Gita offers a solution for every human problem

## THE GLORY OF THE GITA \*

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M. S. Deshpande

### *Divine Singer*

Let me at the outset pay my reverential homage to Sri Krishna, the *Divine Singer*, the Master-Poet of this mighty poem—the Gita, in the words of a great savant :—

“ O Thou Sacred Singer ! Thou inspired interpreter of divinity ! Whatever may have been Thy name among mortals, I bow before Thee ! Hail to Thee ! Hail to Thee, author of that mighty poem, whose oracles lift up the soul, in joy ineffable, toward all that is sublime, eternal, divine ! Full of veneration, I salute Thee, above all singers and I worship unceasingly the trace of Thy footstep ”

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* This article covers a portion of Chapter one of the author's forthcoming publication entitled “ The Light Eternal of Dr R D Ranade's Dhyana-Gita ”

Abbreviations :

- B P G — ‘The Bhagavadgita as a Philosophy of God realization’ by Dr R D Ranade, M A, D Lit
 C S — ‘The Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, by Dr R D Ranade
 E G. X — ‘Essays on the Gita’, by Shri Aurobindo—The Aurobindo Library INC New York.
 G M X — ‘Gita Meditations’, by Sadhu T L Vaswani
 L B X — ‘Lectures on the Bhagawadgita’, by Prof D S Sharma, M A.
 S G X — ‘Song of God—Bhagawadgita’ Translated by Swami Prabhavanand and Christopher Isherwood

“ Krishna was both a warrior and mystic. We know from Mahabharata and from other Purānas how Krishna as a mystic had meditated long in the Gandhamadana forest, on Pushkara lake, and on the Badari mountain. This aspect of Krishna's mystical achievement has not been noticed by many, because like La Placa in his famous reply to Napoleon, “ they have not felt the necessity for the hypothesis. ” It was due to the spiritual power that Krishna gathered in his meditations at these three places of natural scenery, a forest, a lake and a mountain, and devoted himself to God, and having ultimately succeeded in realizing Him, that he became later on what the Gita calls Yogeshwara and as Yogeshwara he was responsible for the victory of the Pandavas. It is due to the spiritual power which a man gets through his meditations that he is enabled to spread the spiritual influence far and wide.”²

“ In the greater part of the Mahabharata, ” writes Edgerton “ Krishna appears in a strictly human guise. In the narrative of the Gita he is still both god and man, an incarnation of the Deity in human form. In the philosophical teaching of the Gita, Krishna has all the attributes of a full-fledged monotheistic deity and at the same time the attributes of the Upanishadic Absolute. ”³

Thus “ one need not view Krishna as a superman to see that the basis of his character is not soft-heartedness but sacrificial love. He is never a fanatic. He has an all understanding and all-seeing mind. On all the paths he sees the One; in all creeds he sees some element of the One Truth of God. ”⁴ Krishna's life and teaching are, therefore, heroic, profound, charged with the wisdom and purity that see God face to face. In Him and His flute, in Him and His words, is the fragrance of the spirit, the perfume of the forest and the field. Krishna's flute sings in love of the cowherds and the milkmaids of Gokul and Vrindavan, as Krishna's fire passes into Arjuna's soul, making him a hero, infused with a Shakti worthy of the disciple of a great Master.⁵

Song Divine

The Gita, is thus, a *song eternal*, springing from the divine lips of Bhagawan Sri Krishna—the Divine Singer. It is also Shrimat—full of spiritual splendour. How very fitting is, therefore, the title—“ Shrimat Bhagawadgita ” given to it! The Gita is also described as the ambrosia, milked from the wish-cow of the Upanishads

by the Master Milkman—Krishna for distributing the same among the devout seekers like Arjuna ⁶ At the same time, it is a song of fire flashed out by the Lord of Yoga, to grant light, strength and solace, to the worried warriors like Arjuna, on the sacred battle-field of life.

“Gita claims to be a ‘Dialogue’, a communion of souls, between Krishna and Arjuna. Beautiful is this Book not only in the music of its words, but also in its thought and its vision. This inner beauty of the Gita has ravished the minds and the hearts of many in many lands. The Gita has been translated into more than 40 languages. Whence cometh its power if not from the heart of a Holy one who has, through centuries of India’s History, remained a symbol of eternal youth? He took up the flute and as he sang, the music of His heart rang through the souls of multitudes, His song—the “Song of God”—still our hearts doth sway, while crowns and kingdoms have passed away” ⁷

“Krishna’s religion, how simple ! how sublime ! The Gita interprets a Faith which knows no East, no West : a Faith without a dogma without a rite, a faith without restrictions of race or creed, a Religion of Brotherhood, of one Life in all, a Religion of Spirit and Truth a Religion of dedicated work, a Religion of Love ! The Gita teaches how men may be perfect as the Purana Purusha is perfect . The Gita is a masterpiece of thought, is a canticle of action, is a creation of spontaneous art is a poem of beauty . The Gita enshrines the wisdom uttered on the battlefield—the wisdom of a divine Poet ... a Masterman who stands as on a rock unmoved by time, untouched by revolutions ” ⁸

“The Gita ” writes Aldous Huxley, “ is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value not only for Indians, but for all mankind . The Bhagawadgita is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy ” ⁹

Thus it should be noted that “ the Gita is not a book of practical ethics but of spiritual life . It teaches not human but divine action, not the performance of social duties, but the abandonment of all other standards of duty or conduct for a selfless performance of the divine will working through our nature,

not social service but the action of the Best, the God-possessed, the Masterman, done impersonally for the sake of the world and as sacrifice to Him who stands behind Man and Nature ”¹⁰

End and means

According to Sri Gurudev, “The Bhagawadgita is one of the greatest works on mysticism that the world has ever seen.” “God-realisation constitutes the Apurvata—novelty or the supreme contribution of the Bhagawadgita.”¹¹ The philosophy of God-realisation is its supreme teaching. The Gita takes its stand on the reality of spiritual experience of which God is the factual content, even as the physical world is the factual content of sense-knowledge. It is possible for the individual to become directly aware of the presence of the Divine.”¹²

This philosophy of God-realisation deals both with the end as well as the means of spiritual life. Brahma-Vidya i.e. God-realisation, is the End and Yoga-Shastra i.e. Path of Union is the means. However, “the Chief object of the Bhagavadgita is a practical one and instead of spending much labour upon a theoretical discussion of the Nature of God, it suggests to us, certain methods by means of which God could be practically attained.”¹³

The Gita is thus more practical than theoretical. Still as it aims at suggesting ways and means of raising the spiritual level of the whole man, it has to deal with all the three aspects of his life viz. metaphysical, moral and mystical. Because, “If we take into account, the integrity of man’s consciousness as a whole, it would seem absolutely impossible in the interest of highest development of which man’s consciousness is capable, to sunder the intellectual from the moral, as the moral from the mystical element. Intelligence without the moral backbone might only degenerate into the cleverest form of chicanery, and a mystic without morality, if such a one were possible, might only be a hideous creature, who is a blot on the spiritual evolution of man. And, again, just as morality to be ratiocinative, must be firmly linked to the intellect, similarly for its consummation, it must end in the mystical attitude which alone is the goal and end of the life of man.”¹⁴ Hence all these three have their own share of discussion in the Gita which is of course done from the practical point of view. “Its appeal is thus to the whole man... T

Gita touches our hearts, convinces our minds and shapes our wills. It covers the whole way of man's pilgrimage to the feet of God. " 15

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1 Schlegel— A German Scholar 2. B P. G pp 10 -102 3 B P G. P 88 4. G M P. 18 5 G. M P 83 6 cf सर्वोपनिषदो गावा दोग्धा गोपालनदनः । 7 G M pp 1-2 8 G. M P 85 9 S G Introduction 10 E G P 29 11. B P. G P 138 12 L P 11 13 B P G P 225 14 C S pp 287-283 15 L. B P xxvi

“ ACT, ACT IN THE LIVING PRESENT ”

P. P. Gokhale

The Bhagawadgita is the best authority on the Vedanta, the age-old religion of India.

In the Bhagawadgita, the sum and substance of all the Upanishads, Krishna (whom the human world to win freedom, must not worship as Krishna but as the self or ‘The Lord of Souls’) talks to Arjuna or Gudakesha, the ‘Lord of Sleep’ or the ‘Conqueror of sleep’. The talk was given on the battle-field of Kurukshetra which was also the Dharmakshetra, the ‘field of Virtue’, meaning the world. The five Pandavas, Panduputras were five brothers representing righteousness and had to fight the hundred cousins representing the worldly objects that human beings are attached to and have to contend against. The most heroic of the Pandavas, Arjuna represents the awakened soul and is the central figure on the battle-field. Human beings have to fight all sense-delights, the things to which human beings are most attached. The former have to kill the latter. In other words, sense-delights have to be given civil death. Human beings have to be detached, for they are Brahman—the impersonal beginningless Supreme Spirit. All other ideas must be merged in this one alone.

Krishna as human being did everything but without any attachment. He was in the world but not of it. He was thus a spiritual hero of his times and an epoch-maker after Janaka, the spiritual hero of the Ramayana period. His teachings as given in the Gita are the grandest the world has ever known. Human

life and its duties in the material world, have to be carried on, like a boat running over the surface of the sea. The boat dips into the sea, as much of its own body as is necessary to float over the sea surface and yet does not allow sea-water to rush into itself so as to endanger its progress and ultimately to drown it along with its contents and constituents. Human life carried on with that accuracy and with a constant eye upon the ultimate goal of being one with the Almighty, is really a spiritual life, aspired by all apostles, sages and saints of all times and religions. That is what Bhagawan Sri Krishna has emphasised in so many ways and so many suggestions in the Bhagawadgita.

“ All knowledge depends upon calmness of mind. He who has filled the universe, He who is Self in self, how shall I salute Him ? To know the Atman as my nature is both knowledge and realisation. I am He, there is no doubt about it. No thought, no word, no need, creates a bondage for me. I am beyond the senses, I am knowledge and Bliss. There is neither existence nor non-existence; all is Atman, everything is Atman. All ideas of relativity and superstitions ought to be shaken off. All conceptions of caste, birth, gods and religions must be wiped away and must vanish. There is no question of being and becoming. All talk of Dualism and Advaitism is nonsense. The Universe itself is the Holy one and He alone. Then why bother about Yoga and other remedies to make human life pure ? Human life by itself is pure by its very nature. Only one has to realise its truth ”

Realisation of Self is Moksha or liberation. A human being can attain liberation through duty by plunging himself deep into it but without being attached. A duty ought to be done for duty's sake, without any desire whatsoever, for a certain result of fruit or return. Such performance of duty leads to knowledge which in turn brings emancipation. To avoid duty is a sin and to abstain from duty, before knowledge dawns, leads to misery. Duty done for Self realisation creates no bondage. It is as good as a sacrifice or offering to the Lord. It is worship in the strictest sense of the term.

This is the long and short of the Gospel preached by Krishna in the Gita. Such directives keep religion alive. Personalities like Janaka, Krishna and others actually realised the Self. Those that realise Self care for nothing, feel nothing done to the body. They

sit still and enjoy the bliss of Atman (Self) even while red-hot coals burn their body.

If this teaching of the Bhagawadgita is correct in a nut-shell, the stanza therefrom which appeals best to my brain and heart is the 22nd in its third chapter wherein, " Oh Arjuna, I have no duty in the whole world " says Krishna

The third chapter of the Bhagawadgita impresses the importance of Action. " Act, act in the living present " is its message. One ought to do one's duty that comes to one's lot or that is assigned to one or that has to be done as per dictates of the discretion regarding the circumstances or situation around. One who does that duty selflessly but systematically, promptly and correctly deserves to be as respected as a *samnyasin*. A *samnyasin* is one who renounces affectation, affection and affinity whatsoever, He is ever one with the Almighty, the all pervading Self. Just as the Almighty is everywhere and is felt in every small or great move even of a particle, similarly must his devotee, the Bhakta, or the Samnyasin be a man of action. Even after a realisation of the world and its ways as well as the aim and end thereof, one must "Act, act in the living present" as a man of the world would do; yet one who is a Bhakta, a devotee or a *samnyasin* ought not to feel any interest in the enjoyment of the fruition of his efforts and of the cause one advocated, though enjoyment of the same by others must prove a source of calm and quiet for his mind. Faith in God who informs the cosmic order; Truth which inspires his mind, word and deed, Dedication which offers all acts of life as an offering to God; Submission which purifies the body and mind as well as transmutes instincts, passions and emotions into things of beauty. This is Dharma. It is not based on any particular forms and doctrines. It has three aspects, Truth, Love and Beauty. For these values, the Indian culturists and Indian fathers of yore lived and died. They are embedded in India's national outlook. In this very light, Krishna has made a reference to Janaka, the ideal of the Ramayana epoch.

There have been advocates of renunciation and advocates of " Act, act in the living present " Those that practise either are great, greater and greatest in their own way. But one who achieves a " solution sweet " of the two, is really Great. Because, so long as Nature prevails, non-action is an impossibility.

Abstinence from doing a certain thing is, of course, a possibility but it is not non-action, want or absence of action. It does not result in perfection.

Perfection or thorough amalgamation with Existence is all in all. All that is moving and un-moving is enveloped by God. All is Brahman. Only Existence was in the beginning. It began to function, to act. One looking close and deep can realise it everywhere after persistent trials and experiments. That is why the Gita says वासुदेव सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ।

To visualise Existence as encompassing All, one has to develop a higher perception through long training and strict discipline. For want of that, matter is treated different from the spirit. Nature, that is the physical aspect of things, is not a denial of the spirit, nor is the spiritual, a break-away from Nature. Laws of both are integral. Spirit lies inert in the stone, wakes up in the plant, perceives in the animal, develops self-consciousness in man and becomes manifest in the Yogi or Samnyasin.

In all conscious efforts, therefore, the life must have a flow of evolution or self-realisation. The natural must be made spiritual and the spiritual must become natural. Energy and matter, life and mind, conscience and spirit are all of the same stuff of Reality. Existence is made of them all.

Existence is self-regulative. It has to produce, protect and finish. Duty commands. The motive behind everything is summed in devoting every constructive or destructive action and its fruits to the Almighty already in the Society at large. “श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु” i.e. the motto. Dedicate every thing to God. Everything according to one’s need has to be received by one as expressed in the injunction, “*tena tyaktena bhunjeethah*”—Enjoy through sacrifice. By moulding individuals into dutiful devotees with self-imposed discipline, Existence eliminates, on the one hand, profit-motive, unfair competition and exploitation, and on the other, coercion as well as authoritarianism. The social order thus based has been sustaining itself for thousands of years. It depends for its stability neither on capital nor upon the state but upon the voluntary submission of the individual as well as the social mind to the dictates of discrete conscientiousness recognising the All-pervading, already in man, in society, nay, in every part, particle and parcel of the universe. Strengthening of this conscientiousness is India’s

special and peculiar contribution to the world-culture leading to human welfare.

As Swami Vivekananda directed his brother-monks in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the wise of the wisest has, even after his having renounced every material interest, “to act, act in the living present.” No second passes without one’s doing something. Then, there ought to be a disciplined life or a chalked out plan of utilising every second for every one. The common man has not the capacity to chalk out a plan. He has the ability to follow an example. Example is better than a precept. Only the man of wisdom and action can set an example to the common man. Hence a wise man cannot set aside his duty as an individual and as a social being. If and when it is impossible to keep body and soul together without acting in the living present, how can a wise man abstain from performing his duties as an individual and also as a social being ? If he abstains from doing his duty, he betrays the very purpose of his creator. The creator ordained that every part and particle of the world should act co-operatively. Co-operation means mutual respect and readiness to sacrifice for the common weal. Co-operation has the “Devas”, i.e. those that have light, loftiness, learning and capacity to uplift can set an example of co-operation. They are to use and utilise their capacities and abilities to do good to others as well as to themselves. If they be self-centred, they betray their life’s very mission. Thereby they would prove themselves sinners against the society, social order and universal brotherhood. They would never have such a fall. In doing their individual and social duties, they seek no self-interest; they have none of the kind; yet they perform those duties just to worship their creator, the Almighty and thus to identify themselves with that Supreme one.

In this context, Krishna of the Bhagawadgita has said in the 22nd stanza of the third canto that he has no need to do anything in the three worlds for he had gained whatever was worth-gaining. All the same, says Krishna, he does discharge his individual and social duties in order that the foundation of society may not be shaken to destruction. Every one (however small or great one might otherwise be) has a following in one’s own orbit or circle. If, then, one acts waywardly in the living present, one misleads

one's following which consequently leads to a fall. This ought never to occur.

Man is essentially divine. But this Divinity is acted upon by two forces. They are the forces of good and evil, of light and darkness. The divine and the undivine both operate in the human consciousness so much so that one is mistaken at times for the other. To completely overcome and eradicate the undivine elements and to fully allow the divine element to manifest itself in all its radiant light and glory, one's thoughts and deeds must be pure and benevolent. Then alone life becomes spiritual and may be named as Yoga. This is the method of self-realisation. This is the great path which leads one to Immortality, Supreme Bliss and Eternal Peace.

This is what exactly Kṛiṣṇa did and preached. He was the master-mind of his own times and has clearly placed before the listening world a practical course of life for the society. He says that People come by the path he treads मम वत्सन्निवर्तन्ते मनुष्या पार्थ सर्वशः. It is no mere boast, every one ought to reach that degree of perfection. That self-confidence, conviction or sobriety becomes an achievement, if one be perfectly resigned, perfectly unconcerned and yet truly dutiful. The Divine wisdom of the dutiful brain and the enthusiastic heart shines ever and anon, only when it ripens through the progressive process of devotion, meditation and purity in "Act, act in the living present." That wisdom rejoices in truth and its triumphs alone. For through truth alone lies the way to Brahman where dwell Love, Beauty, Eternal Bliss and Peace.

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THE GIST OF THE TEACHING OF THE BHAGAWADGITA

N. G. Desai

When one starts to think of oneself and the world around, one finds three kinds of elements in it; Matter, Life and the Creator of them. In the Gita Matter is called Ksara Purusa, the element which is subject to change. Here the word Purusa signifies the quality of Life. According to the Gita, Matter and Life are without beginning (BG 13-1). But without the assistance of Life, Matter is incapable of playing this game of creation and destruction and that is why the Gita aptly calls this Ksara Purusa. The second element, Life, is called Aksara Purusa which is ingrained in all the forms and is immutable and stationary i. e. Kutastha (BG 15-16). The third element, the Creator, which is behind this Life Matter phenomenon is called Uttama Purusa (BG XV-17-18). This principle is the base of the whole cosmic Life परमात्मभाव (सगुणब्रह्म) and quite different from the Life and the Matter in the unit Vyasti. The Gita says that there is also a supreme thing above all these three elements which is Eternity i. e. Brahman. The human intellect can experience Matter and Life directly and can accept the Creator by the inferential evidence but the Eternity i. e. Brahman remains unknown to it (III 16; IV 24, 31; V 6, 19; VII 29; VIII 3, 24; XIII 12, 30; XVIII 50).

This Life in the Matter is nothing but consciousness, Jnana-shakti. The total consciousness in the unit, is the Atman the real soul. The partial consciousness within the Sheaths (Upadhi) such as physical body, mind, intellect etc. is called Jiva i. e. Ego. Originally this trapped consciousness is the same divine cosmic consciousness.

Now the question is how this trapped consciousness i.e. Jiva, can be liberated.

The Gita suggests two kinds of means for the liberation of the Ego (जीव) one of which is the right action, the other is self knowledge. Action is required for the purification of the Matter and knowledge is necessary for the freedom of the Life. Under the head of right action come all the meritorious deeds and the self-knowledge that can be obtained with the help of discrimination between truth and untruth नित्यानित्यविवेक (II 17; V 16; XIII 2; IV 42) by the renunciation of the desire for material things Vairagya (VI 35; XIII 8-9; XVIII 52) taking resort to divine wealth दैवीसम्पद् (XVI 1, 2, 3 & 5) and the ardent desire for the liberation (VII 29) from all kinds of dualities.

In the third chapter the Gita, giving the warning that in this universe nobody can live without doing any action (III-5), says that only the gladsome voluntary sacrifice helps the doer to be free from all the bondages of action (Karman). This idea of sacrifice (III 9, 13) in the Gita is quite different from that of ancient Vaidika ceremonial practice of sacrifice. The Gita wants to draw the attention of people towards a great principle active in this universe. Without sacrifice there is no creation, and knowing this truth one must act accordingly. The action wisely done without a desire of enjoying its fruit sets the doer free. Only the person inspired by the self-knowledge is capable of doing such pure action without attachment and such a person is called कर्मयोगी by the Gita.

Thus, the Gita lays emphasis on the action with knowledge, and for this purpose in the second chapter it attaches a great importance to the self-knowledge called Buddhiyoga. Only the man of self knowledge can realize the cardinal truth that "The unreal (II 16) hath no being and the real never ceaseth to be". In the life of such a person all the previous values are changed and he can live altogether a new glorious life as स्थितप्रज्ञ (II 56-57) stable-minded. For achieving this state of mind the Gita emphatically says that for the awakening of व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धि resolute understanding i.e. Prajna (II 44-66) is quite necessary. This Buddhi is quite different from the common intellect. Common intellect can develop the faculty of having success in all kinds of arts and sciences, and be extremely active but cannot be creative

in the real sense. There is another faculty which is dormant in man called व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धि and with the awakening of this, man becomes able to perform right or pure action.

What is that right or pure action which is called निष्काम कर्म (II 51-70; XII 13). It is very essential to understand that the flow of action and reaction (cause-effect) will never make the doer free from the bondage of action and such a person cannot be really happy and enjoy Bliss. So, there is another kind of action which exists beyond this chain of action and reaction, and that is called निष्काम कर्म. Let us assimilate this fact by citing two illustrations. The action of the tree is natural action without any reaction because it gives its fruits as well as shade to both who nourishes it and who cuts it. Another example is of the sun. He never thinks of distributing his heat and light unequally. He shines on the palace of the rich as well as on the cottage of the poor. This kind of action is natural and without reaction. Having taken this philosophy into consideration, the Gita says " Oh doer, (II 47) your privilege is only to act and not desire its fruit. From the above explanation we know for certain that only action without knowledge is useless for making the Matter i. e. Upadhi pure and the unfoldment of the consciousness cannot be achieved by any kind of action. Consciousness or Life-principle or Atman is originally free and independent of anything (IV 16, 17, 18) as well as beyond action and inaction i.e. Akarma as it cannot be a result of any process. So how that can be achieved through disciplined action ? Only matter can be changed by action because it is in its nature. All-pervading Life or the ever present cosmic consciousness. the Truth, that Parmatman is waiting for his devotee. That truth is omnipotent, so it is not anywhere far away; it is in our heart. Only we must be aware of it.

After properly understanding the full significance as well as the purpose of knowledge and action we must turn to the devotion of the Supreme. Without devotion or love we will not be able to have direct experience of that Supreme truth So the Gita has introduced the Yoga of self-subdual i.e. आत्मसंयमयोग particularly in its sixth chapter and the Yoga of devotion i. e. Bhaktiyoga in its twelfth. Though the restraint of the mind, the love for all the divine creation, the devotion for the Supreme, the meditation

of the Truth, seem to be different outwardly, these things are one and the same in essence.

Now we must turn to the most important subject to be considered. What is the obstacle in our way of understanding the Supreme, of our own freedom from all kinds of bondage? If we ponder a little we will find that the real obstacle is our own ignorant (V 15) and conditioned mind. This mind is very unsteady. (VI 34,35) It always runs after the sensual things and so long as it has not become steady and has not turned towards the self i.e Atman there is no hope of finding peace and Bliss. Till then Ego or Jiva will not be free from all the bondage of action and go beyond the boundary of dualities such as joy and sorrow (II 38).

This mind has a great capacity of understanding. If once it becomes aware of the self it will never go astray (VI 21) and will be automatically transformed into उन्मन.

This state is called Para Bhakti in Bhaktiyoga. In this state it experiences the truth (XVIII 54) everywhere and hence it becomes one with the divine love. Then of course, there will not remain even a slight trace of selfish feeling in it. The Gita says that, that very truth, that supreme Love, that God himself absorbs his devotee. So his individuality vanishes and he ultimately becomes one with the Supreme (VI 30).

Let me close this article after considering one knotty point which is always raised by many. Can such a liberated man be a help to the world? Can he or does he perform any action after reaching his goal? Really speaking this is an absurd question raised always by the ignorant. Does not the Supreme Power which is basically free from all these dualities do any good to this world? Does not भगवान् श्रीकृष्ण who is considered a great Yogin free from all desires (III 22,23) and an incarnation of God himself, say "I manifest myself again and again for the establishment of Dharma and for the protection of the good people as well as for the destruction of the bad ones (IV 8)?" We can easily conclude from these two examples that only a liberated person can do some good to this world or in other words, all kinds of his actions are very much useful to the welfare of society. So long as a person has not realized the Self, all his actions will be selfish and full of various desires; and such actions will entangle

him as well as the society in bondage and will not be helpful in any way for the real progress of the world. Such ignorant people, though they are great in many respects from the worldly point of view and applauded by ignorant masses, will create confusion and chaos in this world. Only the liberated person can understand the problems of Life properly and is able to solve them and know the real spirit of the teaching of the Gita :—

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥१८-४८॥

“ O son of Kunti, none should abandon his own innate duty, though it is defective; since all undertakings are vitiated by fault as is fire by smoke.⁴

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THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA *

Rohit Mehta

The great scriptures of the world are beyond the limitations of time and space: they are Eternal and Universal. The Bhagawadgita belongs to this category of scriptures and, as such, it is not a Book merely for the Hindus; its message has a universal application. It is as fresh today as it was when given to Arjuna many centuries ago. In fact, modern man is in need of the message of the Bhagawadgita if he is to find freedom from the tensions and anxieties brought into his life by the scientific and technological developments of today.

What indeed is the problem of the modern man? The new advances in science and technology have brought about an utter confusion of value in the life of men and women living in the present day civilization. There is increasing stress on quantitative rather than qualitative values. His inner life is poor, and he is striving to free himself from the thralldom of this poverty by acquiring more and more of the material things that science and technology have made available. Man is seeking a physical solution to a problem which is fundamentally psychological. He thinks that science, being so powerful, can solve all problems. But he forgets that while science can solve the problem of speed, it can give no guidance as to the direction that one must follow. He has lost sight of the fact that while science can give comfort,

* This forms the Introduction to the author's book 'From Mind to Supermind'. It is reproduced with the permission of the publishers and the author.

it cannot give happiness; for happiness consists not in the possession of things, but in freeing the mind of all its inhibitions so that it is rendered pure and innocent. While the modern age has known the conquest over matter, it has yet to learn the secrets of conquering the mind and without the latter the former is not only meaningless but positively dangerous. Man may have gained in knowledge, but he lacks wisdom. Unless he can transform knowledge into wisdom, his future and the future of the entire race is dark and dismal. In other words, man needs today, above everything else, a Right Philosophy of Life.

It is this right philosophy of life which the Bhagawadgita provides through its priceless message. It points to a way of life which will help the modern man to find a solution to the baffling problems of existence. The Bhagawadgita not only enunciates the Gospel of Right Action, it also unmistakably points to the fact that Right Action is possible only if there is Right Perception. And Right Perception in terms of the Gita is that condition of the human mind in which it is capable of total and undistracted attention, freed from confusion of thought and not caught in the play of the opposites. The teaching of the Gita leads Arjuna, step by step, from distractions to illumination, from the mind that is caught up in the pulls of desire to the mind that is illumined by the light of Buddhi. In other words, it leads him from Mind to Super Mind.

Does the Gita ask man to renounce the world in pursuit of spiritual objectives? Does it suggest that man must give up action in order to explore the realms of the Super-Mind? The uniqueness of the teaching of the Bhagawadgita lies in the fact that it asks man to seek his spiritual objectives in the daily avocations of life—it says that man can come to supreme enlightenment not by running away from action but by performing all actions in the right manner. How can man come to recognize Right Action? The Gita says that as he frees himself from Reaction (Vikarma), he comes to the deep and profound experience of Inaction (Akarma). Inaction or Akarma is indeed the right background for the performance of Karma or Action—action that is true, action that is free from all contamination of self.

In the three principal definitions of Yoga given in the Gita we perceive the path indicated by Sri Krishna to attain

point of Right Perception from where alone Right Action can emerge. Speaking about Yoga, the Gita says that it is 'a dissociation from that which gives an association with sorrow.' What is it that gives to man an association with sorrow? Surely it is mind with its ability to compare and contrast which brings to the human individual a sense of sorrow. The problem of man's suffering is fundamentally the problem of mind caught up in the process of comparison and contrast. All his reactions emanate from this process. In fact, it is this process which constitutes the ceaseless movement of the mind, the movement which conditions the perceptive activity of man. The Gita deals comprehensively with the conditioning factors of the mind. It calls them TAMAS, RAJAS and SATTVA—inertia, activity and harmony, respectively. One of the clear instructions of Sri Krishna to Arjuna is that he should transcend these three attributes of the mind so that he can come to a clear and undistorted perception of men and things. To dissociate from that which gives an association with sorrow is indeed to be aware of these attributes and their functioning within one's own psyche. It is in this awareness that one understands, the meaning of the second definition of Yoga to be found in the Gita. It states that Yoga is Equilibrium. The state of equilibrium is indeed the poise of inaction, and it can be achieved only when the mind is purged of its three attributes. So long as the mind is caught up in the process of an identification with, or a condemnation of, the movement of the three attributes, so long there can be no experience of equilibrium or silence. From the point of equilibrium whatever emerges is good and beneficent. The third definition of Yoga given by the Gita is : Yoga is skill in action. All actions become perfect when they emanate from the Ground of Inaction or the Ground of Equilibrium.

Modern man is indeed besieged with great inner conflict, and it is this conflict which has caused the utter disintegration of his psychological life. The disintegration within has caused unhappiness without. He is verily in search of inner integration and perhaps, for this, there can be no better guide than the teaching of the Bhagawadgita. The creation of an Integrated Individual—*yukta*—is indeed the purpose of the intensely dynamic message of the Gita. The poise of Inaction, where the

opposites of the mind are transcended, is a state of psychological integration. The Gita deals with this problem in a very comprehensive manner, in discourse after discourse, until, in the last discourse, Arjuna sees the identity of the Individual and Cosmic Wills, and, with that perception, he arrives at the cessation of inner conflict and therefore to a state of perfect integration.

The message of the Gita has an immediate and practical bearing on the problems of the modern age. It shows a way out of the complexities of the Mind, to a complete and unfettered freedom of the Super-Mind. The Gita says that this path is not meant only for the few; it can be trodden by all who seek freedom from life's entanglements. In an age where the individual is becoming more and more insignificant due to the impacts of political, economic and social forces, the Gita brings to man a message of hope and cheer, for it shows to him that way of life which leads to the regaining of his lost significance. It indicates to him the path of creative living.

The spiritual regeneration of man is indeed the way to the creation of a happy society—this is verily the refreshing and the revitalizing message of the Bhagawadgita.

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Part II

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ १८-६२ ॥

‘Surrender thyself to Him alone with all thy being, O Bharat. By His grace, thou wilt arrive at Supreme Peace and eternal place.’

This verse is the most important to me, as I long for peace and this verse shows me the way. I have to surrender myself to Him; to whom? To God, who is described in 18-61. He is, in my heart, in the heart of all beings; all beings are on machines and God by his Maya is causing them to move about.

My mind, life, body is my machine. I am a soul, a portion of God (15-7). MAYA is God's Power. Three qualities Satwa, Rajas and Tamas constitute this power (7-14); my machine is ruled by these qualities, i. e. by this power. So long as my machine rules me, so long as desire of mind, life, body rule me, I can have no peace. I must become master of my machine; then I can have peace. If I surrender myself to God, the master of Power, i. e. of all machines, then by His grace I share in His Power. The greater the surrender, the greater the share in His Power. Utter surrender with all my being i. e. with all my mind, life, body will mean for me, utter identification with God, and so His Power will, for all practical purposes, be my Power. So I can have Supreme peace and eternal place which is God Himself.

I am asked to surrender myself to Him *alone*. I stress the word *alone*. Alone to God in my heart I can surrender myself without any hesitation. God is in every heart, but I cannot think of surrendering myself to any human being, however great; I can listen to anyone but I cannot surrender myself to any one. Hints on pure living, noble living, I can have from any human or Superhuman being; as a matter of fact, I look upon every one, every thing around me as my preceptor actual or potential; but to no one can I surrender myself—"To him alone surrender thyself" says Sri Krishna and I am convinced that in this saying he is perfectly right "Surrender thyself with all thy being" says Sri Krishna and I again say, he is perfectly right in saying this. My body's hungers, my life's craving, my mind's longing all must I surrender to Him and without His sanction I must not satisfy any hunger. His nature is Love. I may depend upon it, that He will do the needful for me, when I surrender myself to Him.

Complete surrender to Love—What is there difficult for me? Do I not wish to become love incarnate? Love is Joy; utter Love is utter Joy. Do I not desire utter Joy above all? Utter Love is the way to it Joy is the name of God in our scriptures—*Sat-Chit-Ananda* is our God God is Joy because He is Love. The surrendered soul is dear to me, says the Lord (12-14), for such a soul hates none, befriends all, is compassionate, free from egoism, indifferent to pleasure and pain, forgiving, ever contented, self-controlled, firm-resolved, God-centred. These are characteristics of deep and wide Love (12-13 14).

I have said at the beginning "I long for peace". It does not mean that I long for "inaction". No, I do not long for inaction. Inaction and peace may go together, but I have to say that action and peace can go together God is Eternal Peace and at the same time Eternal Action. My entire surrender to God will enable me to enjoy peace in Action And that is what I want.

Love can kill and attempt to kill Non-killing is not the highest Dharma, to me, killing, non-killing is a mere detail. The principle is Love, which is to desire the good of all and every one including those who must be killed Killing is merely removing the soul from his body; to give him a chance to think over his doings and to correct himself before taking another body to continue his 'evolution'.

This world is a theatre of soul-evolution. God is the Master of soul evolution. By surrendering to Him, I help God in His task, in my humble way. He appreciates my move and sends down His grace to secure me Peace in Action.

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स्वधर्मो निधन श्रेयः परधर्मा भयावहः ॥ ३-३५ ॥

Sri Krishna Bhagawan said to Arjuna that one's religion is benevolent to oneself and others' religion is dreadful. The advice of Bhagawan given to Arjuna is being interpreted by some persons in many a way but in my humble opinion, it is necessary to bear in mind that we should try to understand properly the motive of Sri Krishna in giving advice to Arjuna. Throughout the Gita, there is this consistent effort of Bhagawan to make Arjuna understand in proper perspective the essence of religion through various instances. There is nothing of soul-religion, Hindu Religion or Christian Religion. Sri Krishna has to impress on the mind of Arjuna that as he was born in a Kshatriya family and taught the art of Kshatriyas his talent and bravery should be used for the nation and that was his religion, that is, Duty.

Bhagawan candidly told Arjuna that it was his duty and nothing but duty. Had there been anybody else than Arjuna, Bhagawan Sri Krishna would have treated this subject in altogether a different manner. The essence of Sri Krishna's advice centres round the fact that it is tendered to different persons according to their attitudes of mind and characteristics. Bhagawan tendered advice to Uddhava as per his mental attitude. The true meaning of 'Dharma' is nothing but 'Duty'. But this has to be performed as is allotted to one in accordance with one's attitude. Bhagawan Sri Krishna tendered wise words

to a seeker after truth some times in the form of devotion, and sometimes in the form of compassion or knowledge. From all this, it should be understood that duty has relation to one's attitude. The performance of one's duty is in true sense a service to God

I do not agree with those who declare their community as Charnakara and will perform the function of a tailor, or refuse to go to the battle-field even after declaring that they are Kshatriyas. Be true to yourself. Do not be ashamed to tell the truth. What is the use of saying that you are a Brahmin and perform the duty of a clerk? Declare your order and religion according to your bent of mind and practical functioning

I feel that Hindu Religion is our Social religion and therefore it can be called the national religion of all for a particular period of time. Like an individual, a nation has also a religion

The essence of Bhagawan Sri Krishna's teachings to Arjuna was that he must act fearlessly, not caring even for death. The present phase through which our country is passing demands, 'duty first and everything else afterwards'. I am convinced that the teachings of the Gita, the Philosophy of the Gita would go a long way to save the nation from the present catastrophe.

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कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ २-४७ ॥

I first read the Bhagawadgita when I was studying in the B A class at the Deccan College, Poona, in 1913-14. It was prescribed for the B. A. Examination of the Bombay University and we had to study it intensively. The verse which sums up the teaching of the Bhagawadgita is in my opinion the verse given above.

“You are entitled only to do the work prescribed for you. You have no right to its fruit. Do not do your work with the expectation of any reward. Do not also be fond of inaction.”

This verse asks us all to do our duty disinterestedly, without the least expectation of a reward. This is a unique message given for the first time by the Bhagawadgita. That work was preceded in time by the whole of Vedic literature. The Vedas laid down various rites and ceremonies which were to be performed by persons who desired to get some reward by their performance. These are called *Karma Karmas*. If one gets entangled in them, there is no escape from them. Human desires are never fully satisfied. As it is said in the following verse, desire is never satisfied by enjoyment. On the other hand, it goes on increasing enormously just as fire is never extinguished by pouring oblations into it. It flares up all the more.

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मैव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

In the age of our downfall, history tells us, the number of Vratas had immensely increased. The Vratas were religious rites performed with the object of gaining some desired object or religious merit. These Vratas are enumerated in the Chaturvargachintamani of Hemadri and such other works. There was hardly a day in the whole year for which some Vrata or other was not prescribed. If one were to perform the Vratas prescribed in such works, one would have no time left for any other activity. The people in the age of the Yadavas were apparently wholly engrossed in the performance of these Vratas and had little time or inclination to think of anything else. They became oblivious of their duty to their relatives, their neighbours and their country. The result was that when the Muslims invaded the country they found little resistance among the people. They could easily vanquish the people of Maharashtra and establish themselves in the country. If the people had thought over the meaning of the aforementioned verse of the Bhagawadgita, they would have risen like one man to oppose the enemy. But that was not to be. We have to learn a lesson from this historical event.

Nor does it behove us to take to inaction and retire from worldly life. Some of the Upanisads teach us that man's salvation lies in *nivṛtti* or retirement from the world. As the sage Yajnavalkya says, the wise men, having realised Atman, relinquish all desires for progeny, wealth and fame, and take to the life of a mendicant¹. This was the goal preached as the highest in Jainism and Buddhism. But this way of life is not conducive to social stability. Therefore the Bhagawadgita says 'Do not have recourse to inaction'. You have certain duties to perform, certain obligations to discharge as you are born in this world. All social life will be impossible if all or even a majority of the people take to the life of a mendicant. Besides, as the Bhagawadgita has said elsewhere, a life of complete inaction is an impossibility, for

1 एतं वै तमात्मानं विदित्वा ब्राह्मणा पुत्रैषणायाश्च वित्तैषणायाश्च लोकैषणायाश्च व्युत्थायाथ भिक्षाचर्यं चरन्ति । बृहदारण्यकोपनिषत् ३-५-१

even breathing is a sort of action. So one has to engage oneself in some actions whether he wills it or not. Why not then do the work prescribed for you in the best way possible viz without any selfish motive ? If one does this, one gets a rare satisfaction, of having done one's duty without any aim of personal gratification. Such action ennobles the mind and takes one nearer to God. The Bhagawadgita assures us that all such work finally results in the highest knowledge i. e. the knowledge of the Self, which leads to Moksha the *summum bonum* of human life (सर्व कर्माखिल पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ ४-३३ ॥).

The aforementioned verse of the Bhagawadgita therefore admirably sums up its teaching. It has been my endeavour throughout my life to do my duty disinterestedly, without fear or favour and without any expectation of reward. I can say therefore that it gives one the peace of mind that is so essential for a happy life.

We, the people of Bharatavarsa, are fortunate in having such a gem of a religious work in our heritage. But we have not yet imbibed its teaching. In our literature we have no 'ode to duty' as our former rulers have in theirs. We are often oblivious of our duties. In modern times people are more conscious of their rights than of their duties. This leads to strife and unhappiness. Let us follow the golden teaching of the Bhagawadgita and let each one of us do his duty in the best way possible. I have no doubt that if we do this, we shall soon make heaven of this earth.

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मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्त्यस्याऽध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममोभूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३-३० ॥

“Leaving all acts philosophically to me, having no selfish thoughts and with mind loosed from desires, put off thy anxiety and boldly fight.”

The author of the Gita closes up his exposition with the present verse. What follows is a *granthaphala-sūti* (in contradistinction to *tattva-phalasūtis* of other chapters), the like of which we come across right at the end of the work. Not a reiteration and appraisal of the tenets of a particular context but a general concluding note. The work is written on two levels, the first phase ending here. The rest is an expanded argument of what has gone before. Apart from internal merit, the verse thus stands unique in the whole range of excerpts, speaking text critically.¹

When disappointment stares Arjuna in the face, he is asked to do his duty energetically and wholeheartedly. Indian scholars have generally held that the path of activity is only a means to the higher end of metaphysical knowledge, which attained the worldly activities may be relinquished. Arjuna was, according

1 The Kashmerian commentator Rājānaka Rāmakaṇṭha expressly states that the main teaching ends with this verse

to these scholars only an humble aspirant (*mandadhikarin*) having no qualification for knowledge. But it is now fully established that even after the attainment of the Siddhi, the Gita upholds the cause of vigorous action, for the good of the world, not however without qualifying its statement. Accordingly, we are asked to renounce the passion which takes hold of us. We lose sight of the fact that we act according to our 'nature' and seldom, if ever, through our own sweet will. It is the Lord who is propelling us to action so to say against our will². Even on a purely materialistic view, this will easily come home to us that we have to put in immense effort to accede to an opponent's view, and even then quite often we are utterly unsuccessful. This is general experience. We should, therefore, leave out any credit of whatever we may set ourselves to achieve. We are ordained to dedicate all our best actions to the Lord, the real force behind all energy. The highest principle being only a superintending Deity, is a sort of catalytic agent with Matter which is responsible for the world. Popularly, however, the credit goes to Him and such attributes as *Kartृtva* *Bhoktrtva* are valid in His case. With regard to the absolute viewpoint, opinion is divided. Our relation with the God is imagined to be of oneness, or of master and servant, or even, according to one commentator, of friendship³. Despite the various ways of understanding the term *अध्यात्मचेतसा*⁴ there is unanimity among scholars as to the purport, viz discharging the duties 'philosophically'⁵.

Now, all of us strive for different ends, and not just for activity's sake. No activity is possible without an inherent goal. When we are asked not to entangle in the swell of passion for

2 Rāmānuja cites अन्तःप्रविष्टा शास्ता जनानाम् etc. and directly derives the tenet of *nirmanatva* from this.

3 स्वामिभृत्यसबन्ध and ultimate identity according to Śaṅkarācārya, 'मित्रबुद्धि' according to Bhīmaśarman.

4 अध्यात्मनि अन्तर्यामिणि यच्चेत तेन-तत्त्वप्रकाशिका (केशव काश्मीरि-भट्टाचार्यकृता), आत्मानमधिकृत्य, प्रवृत्तमध्यात्म तच्चेत तेन।प्रत्यगदृष्ट्या। तात्पर्य-बोधिनी (शकरानन्दी), अध्यात्म आत्मनि चेत तेन। रामानुज, विवेकबुद्ध्या-शाकरभाष्य, अधि अधिक स चासौ आत्मा च अध्यात्मा। तस्मिन् चेतसा। सर्वाधिकपरमात्मभूतमन्निष्ठचेतसा-अर्थसंग्रह (राघवेन्द्रप्रणीत)

5 This last is generally found in the works of dualists.

the fruit of actions, it is meant that we should offer our best and leave the result to the Almighty. Thus we are freed from the shackles of worldly life. The two factors, giving up of ego and discarding all desire, are therefore aspects of the same argument. We are to fulfil our pledge putting all our heart in it. A vigorous interest is not the same as attachment. With the philosophic sense we have taken a distinct step. We have only to look forward for dispassionate and yet enthusiastic action, which will save us the limitations and bindings of our life. The Lord will take care of the good and bad points of our performance. We shall confront and try to dominate the circumstances bravely. We shall contribute our specific best irreducible to the term of others and find a realization of our common aspirations in ceaseless efforts for the larger life of mankind, and these efforts must not be paralysed by any sad emotions brought on by a nervous sensitivity to any possibly attendant suffering⁶ The spirit of every individual is indomitable and it is the religious experience and not any dogma that matters.

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 6 सतापहेतुत्वाच्छोक एव ज्वरशब्देनोक्त । गूढार्थदीपिका ( मधुसूदन सरस्वतीविरचिता ), सर्वस्मिन् कर्मणि ममेदमिति ममत्वस्य, निष्फले कष्टसाध्ये वा कर्मणि ज्वरस्य च प्रसवतत्वात् । शोकादेर्निवृत्यर्थमेव सिद्धय-सिद्धयो समो भूत्वेति ( २४८ ) भगवतोक्तत्वाच्च । भाष्योत्कर्षदीपिका ( धनपति सूरि-निबद्धा ).

यत्त योगेश्वर कृष्णो यत्त पार्थो धनुर्धर  
तत्त श्रीविजयो भूतिर्धुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ १८-७८ ॥

Opinions differ. There are different verses from the Bhagawad-gita which have influenced different writers most. According to Shri Raman Mahasishi the verse containing the quintessence of the Bhagawadgita is अहमात्मा गुडाकेश Verse No 20 from Chapter 10. Dr P. V. Kane says that in his opinion कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते Verse No 47 from Chapter 2 contains the cardinal principles of conduct enunciated by Lord Krishna for the benefit of Arjuna and through him for the benefit of the whole mankind. Shri Shankaracharya attaches great importance to the Verses श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् Verse No. 33 from Chapter 4, यथैधासि Verse No 37 from Chapter 4, and न हि ज्ञानेन सदृश... Verse No 38 from Chapter 4, whereas Lokamanya Tilak attaches utmost importance to सन्यास कर्मयोगश्च... Verse No. 2 from Chapter 5.

It may be said without even the slightest sting of any hyperbolical language that Gita is the essence of the universal human religion and according to me the verse containing the quintessence of Gita is the last Verse, namely यत्त योगेश्वर कृष्ण.... Verse No 78 from Chapter 18.

Sanjaya says that wealth, success, prosperity and morality are on that side on which are Krishna, Lord of Yogas and Arjuna with a bow in his hand. It is true that some readers might make enquiry as to whether I am fortified by any authority when I say

that the aforesaid verse contains the quintessence of the Bhagawad-gita. My answer to this enquiry is in the affirmative and it may be said in that respect that I am fortified in my view by the opinion of Shri Jnaneshwari.

तैसे शब्दब्रह्म अनंत । जाले सवालक्ष भारत ।  
 भारताचें शते सात । सर्वस्व गीता ॥ १६६१ ॥  
 तयाही साता शताचा । इत्यर्थु हा श्लोक शेषीचा ।  
 व्यास शिष्य सजयाचा । पूर्णोद्गारु जो ॥ १६६२ ॥  
 येणे येकेचि श्लोके । राहे तेणे असिके ।  
 अविद्याजाताचे नीके । जीतले होये ॥ १६६३ ॥

ज्ञानेश्वरी, अध्याय १८

It is rightly said that the views of saints are looked upon by religious persons in Maharashtra as the views of High Courts and that the views of Jnaneshwari are looked upon by them as the views of the Supreme Court against which there is no appeal.

One book was sent to Johnson and he gave his opinion as follows :

“ This book contains many new and good things but the good things are not new and the new things are not good ” Many books are of this type but so far as Gita is concerned it stands on a different level and it can be rightly said that it is the *magna charta* of the universal religion When the “ Shakuntala ” was read by the German Poet, Goethe, he began to dance with joy and said :

Wouldst thou the young year's blossom and the  
 fruits of its decline,

And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured,  
 feasted, fed;

Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in  
 one soul name combine;

I name thee, O Shakuntala, and all at once  
 is said.



Similarly on reading the Gita and hearing the message given therein people really begin to dance with joy. Dale Carnegie has said that there are three most interesting subjects in this world—(1) sex (2) property and (3) religion. So far as religion is concerned it can be said that the most important book is Gita and the most important verse therefrom is यत्त योगेश्वर कृष्ण .

Regard being given to the aforesaid verse, the four words (1) Yogeshvara (2) Krishna (3) Partha and (4) Dhanurdhara merit close and careful scrutiny. The word Yogeshvara (Lord of Yogas) indicates combination of ज्ञानयोग (Path of knowledge), कर्मयोग (Path of action) and भक्तियोग (Path of love).

In the Gita all the three Yogas are discussed and a close and careful perusal of the Gita shows that in our life there should be a harmonious combination of knowledge, action and love.

In the domain of psychology there is a well known story of an American father. He wanted to know the inner inclination of his young boy. He put the boy in a small room and put there three things (1) a dollar (2) the Bible and (3) an orange. His idea was that if the boy would take the dollar in his hand commercial line should be given to him in future. If the boy would take the Bible in his hand priestly line should be given to him in future. If the boy would take the orange in his hand agricultural line should be given to him in future. With that idea the young boy and the aforesaid three things were put in the room and the door of the room was closed. When after a short time the father opened the door he found to his utmost surprise that the boy was sitting on the Bible, that in one hand there was the dollar and with the other hand he was eating the orange. This story is pregnant with great philosophy. Some persons try to follow only the path of knowledge not caring for action and love. Some others try to follow the path of action not caring for knowledge and love. There are still some others who follow only the path of love not caring for knowledge and action. If we properly study the teachings of the Gita we would be satisfied that there should be a satisfactory combination of knowledge, action and love in our life.

A question may crop up as to whether knowledge, action or love should be given highest importance. It may be said in this connection that though in our life there should be a combination of knowledge, love and action still utmost importance should be given to love. J Krishnamurthy has rightly said that of all the qualifications love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest and without it all the rest are not sufficient. Even in the Gita utmost importance is given to the path of love. If we see Verses Nos. 53 and 54 from Chapter 11 or Verses Nos. 55, 64, 65 and 66 of Chapter No. 18 it will be translucent that lord Krishna has given utmost importance to love.

There is a well known story of Sharadchandra who was addicted to drinking wine. He knew that it was extremely bad to drink wine. He also tried his level best to give up that bad habit but the knowledge which he possessed and the action which he was doing did not prove successful for uprooting the evil in question. Ultimately in a state of despondency he went to his Guru Ramkrishna Paramhansa. Ramkrishna said to him "You need not worry. Drink wine as much as you like but before drinking wine dedicate it to me."

Sharadchandra went home with utmost joy thinking that he could now drink as much wine as he liked. When the moment came for drinking wine he remembered that before drinking he was to dedicate it to his Guru. On the spur of the moment a thought flashed in his mind that his Guru was so kind, so good, so motherly and it would be extremely bad on his part to dedicate the worse thing like wine to his Guru. When that thought assumed utmost importance he began to think that instead of dedicating such a filthy thing to his beloved Guru it would be better on his part to give up wine. That thought became powerful; Sharadchandra threw the glass of wine, the glass was broken to pieces and the bad habit of Sharadchandra came to an end.

The aforesaid story is sufficiently eloquent. It teaches the lesson that though in our life there should be a harmonious combination of knowledge, action and love still we should give utmost importance to love.

The second important word is 'Krishna' and that word refers to God. Dr. Joad has written several books and tried

to establish that there is no God in this world. After writing a number of books he ultimately gave a message to the whole world before bidding good-bye to this world and in that message he says that only those persons become happy who believe in God. Browning has said that God is in heaven and all is right with the world. This idea is not accepted by Scientists. Today Scientists say that God is within the heart of every person. It is strikingly significant to note that this very view has been expressed in the Gita long long back when Lord Krishna say...ईश्वर. सर्वभूतानाम् Verse No. 61 Chapter 18.

God lives in our hearts and when we pray to God we obtain unparalleled strength. Mahatma Gandhi has said that without prayer he would have been a lunatic and Dr. Carell, the well-known writer of "Man the Unknown" says that prayer is the most powerful form of energy one can generate.

Dale Carnegie has said that on an average every two minutes one American commits suicide and every half an hour one American goes mad. By way of remedy he suggests that the only remedy for the evil is . *Return to God*.

The third important word in the aforesaid verse is Partha. In the beginning of the Gita Partha was attacked by a sense of sorrow and he was not willing to follow the path of action. Ultimately he became calm and quiet and agreed to follow the path of action. We should not look upon adversity as something bad. We should always remember the words of Hugo who says that adversity makes men and prosperity makes monsters of men. Great importance must be attached to right action and in the words of Maugham the value of art lies not in beauty but in right action. When Partha was convinced about the path to follow, all his sorrow evaporated and he was able to follow the right path. Mill has said that one man with conviction is equal to 99 persons without conviction. It would be profitable for us to know the words of Vivekananda who says that every duty is holy and devotion to duty is the highest form of worship of God. Some learned persons think that Lord Krishna has given advice to Arjuna and his advice really preaches renunciation of Karma. I may be permitted to say with all humility that Lord Krishna preaches not renunciation of Karma but renunciation *in* Karma.

The fourth important word in the aforesaid verse is 'Dhanurdhara' In the first chapter of the Gita Arjuna laid down his bow but ultimately he took up his bow There is a fight between fatalism and effortism. The word 'Dhanurdhara' indicates that we should give utmost importance not to fatalism but to effortism. Some persons complain that though they want to give utmost importance to effortism still they are not endowed with extraordinary talent In this connection the well known words of Edison may be noted :

“ What is meant by extraordinary talent? It is nothing but two per cent inspiration and 98 per cent perspiration. ”

Friends, Science without religion is lame and Religion without science is blind. Taking a scientific religious view I may say, and some of you will agree with me when I say, that the verse which has influenced me most is—यत्न योगेश्वर. कृष्ण.....

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५

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मा नमस्कुरु ।  
मामेवैष्यसि सत्य ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ १८-६५ ॥

Keep thy mind fixed on me, be My devotee; sacrifice to Me;  
prostrate thyself before Me;  
So shalt thou come to Me True to thee is my Promise.  
Thou art dear to Me.

About the fifth century B C there came to the people of  
Israel in their Babylonian exile a revelation which galvanised  
their hearts into a new life, the revelation that God loved them;

Shout for joy, O heavens, rejoice, O earth  
O hills, burst into song

For the Eternal has consoled his people  
and pitied his forlorn folk

“ The Eternal has forsaken me, ” says Sion,  
“ my Lord has forgotten me. ”

Can a woman forget her infant,  
forget to pity her babe ?

Yet even were a mother to forget,

never will I forget thee (Deutero Isaias 49, 113-15)

The other shore of the Arabian sea soon echoed with the  
same revelation when, some time probably during the fourth  
century B C Krishna confided to Arjuna this “ greatest of all His  
mysteries ” ( sarvaguhyatamam ) . “ To me thou art dearer  
exceedingly ” इष्टोऽसि मे हृदमिति । ( XVIII 64 ).

For many centuries the people of India had been aware that Supreme Atman is the necessary and highest object of man's love, but the reciprocity of his love had remained obscure. Could the most perfect, the eternally satisfied one whose all desires are ever realised, the one so blissful as to be subsistent Bliss itself, be the seat of real love for a being so imperfect as man ? Could the Nirguna Brahman be a lover ? And could man's final end be more than metaphorically a mutual embrace of love with the Absolute ?

To men who had been conditioned by the teachings of Upanisadic Vedanta and pre-classical Samkhya a positive answer to such questions could not be given but gradually. The first अध्याय of the Gita still explain the end of man in terms of perfect Yoga-integration and "Nirvana of Brahman" The perfected man, "free from longing, a stranger to all sense of 'I' and 'mine', abandons all desires and draws near to peace This is the state of Brahman, and he who attains to it overcomes delusion Abiding in it at the time of death he goes to the Nirvana of Brahman" ( II 71-72 ) The whole emphasis is here on peace and static changelessness, as indicated by the variations of the root *stha*—which constantly recur in this context The personal God, Krishna, has no relevance to this liberated soul, and in this whole canto he is only referred to once, and then only as an object of concentration ( II 61 )

The same teaching is further elaborated in V 16-29 but with special reference to Brahman "the flawless, whose nature is one and the same ( *samam* )" The liberated man "abides in this sameness" and therefore "in Brahman" "His atman integrated by the 'Yoga of Brahman' he attains to imperishable bliss His joy within, his bliss within, his light within, become Brahman ( *brahma-bhuta* ), he goes to the Nirvana of Brahman" The term *brahma-bhuta* had, at that time been made familiar by Buddhism which had used it to refer to *nirvana* Brahma-nirvana is that static state of complete detachment from conditioned existence and changeless abiding in unconditioned existence. Man can discover it in himself if he will but resort to the "Yoga of Brahman". This would appear to be man's final bliss, but the last stanza introduces a jarring note : the personal God at last asserts his right. The liberated

man, he says, "recognising Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, as the great Lord of the whole universe, as the friend of all beings, attains to peace" ( V 29 ). In the next अध्याय the emphasis is on Atman as the object on which the Yogin concentrates to still his mind but again the teaching is personalised, for the Yogin "attains to the peace that culminated in *nirvana* and which has its basis in Me" ( *matsamstham* VI 15 ). God as personal, then, is the basis of the state of *nirvana* and therefore of Brahman, not vice versa. The Yogin must not think that impersonal selfsameness is the apex of bliss; rather, "who sees Me in all things and all things in Me, for him I am not lost nor is he lost to Me" ( VI 30 ). Pure identity where personality is lost could not conceivably constitute the highest bliss. This can only be found in an identity through mutual enjoyment: "That Yogin who, grasping unity, partakes of Me ( *mam bhajati* from the same root as in *bhakti* ) as indwelling all beings, wherever he may be, abides in me" ( VI 31 )

Thus *brahma-nirvana* implies a *bhakti* of worship. Bhakti, in this sense of actual reverential embrace of the divine Order, is only possible for one who is already integrated. It presupposes the Nirvana which establishes the Yogin in unconditioned existence. The fixation of the innermost soul on God Himself is a completion which perfects that very integration. This point is clearly stated by Krishna in the last stanza of this important अध्याय - "Of all Yogins he who worships Me with faith, his innermost soul ( *antaratman* ) fixed on Me, is, I think, the most integrated of all" ( VI 47 ) This marks a great advance of Hindu religious thought. For the first time it is stated authoritatively that man's liberation from his material condition in space and time is not the end of his ascension, but merely the beginning: The end is personal union with the personal God. *Bhakti* is not only a preparation for *moksha* but, in its highest form, the very completion of it. Krishna says: "who so reveres Me with the unswerving Yoga of *Bhakti* transcending the Gunas, is conformed to becoming Brahman, for I am the ground of Brahman, the immortal, the imperishable, and of eternal law and absolute Bliss" ( XIV 26-27 ). Thus the personal God is the very ground and abode of the unconditioned Brahman ( *Brahmano hi pratistha 'ham* ). That this was a new truth, hard to accept by traditional Brahmapurushins, is amply demonstrated

by the embarrassed commentaries given of this verse by Shankara, Nilakantha, Madhusudana and even Ramanuja and Madhva.

Yet in the eighteenth अध्याय Krishna makes it clear beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt that *brahmanirvana* is not absolutely final but only the fit state to receive the "highest" *bhakti*, that is, a love of God that leaves room for nothing else : "Having become brahman .and the same to all beings, he receives the highest *bhakti* to Me. By *Bhakti* he comes to know Me as I am, how great I am, and who Then knowing Me as I am, he enters Me forthwith " ( XVIII 54-55 ). Contemplation of God's eternal essence is now accompanied by His grace : *matprasadat* ( XVIII 58 ) and this grace introduces in that contemplation the element of fellowship with Him....a fellowship similar to that of Krishna with Arjuna on earth, but now made perfect in eternity.

Thus Krishna's final and most "secret" message integrates the earlier ideal of "becoming Brahman" but displaces and surpasses it. It is the message that God loves man and that the bliss He promises is a bliss of mutual love permeated by contemplation. "Hear my final word", says the personal God in his Krishna theophany, "greatly do I desire thee, therefore will I tell thee thy salvation Bear Me ( ever ) in mind, love Me, worship and reverence Me Thus shalt thou come to Me, I promise thee truly; for thou art dear to me " ( XVIII 64-65 ) This is the amazing revelation common to the Bible and the Gita. But whereas the Jews and the Christians have long since come to take it for granted, and the Hindu Bhaktas have had their religious life deeply permeated by it, the Hindu philosophers have found great difficulty in assimilating it perfectly. It has always seemed to them that the true relationship of the absolute to man which their mutual love would necessarily imply could not be accepted as ultimate. Unlike the doctrine of relationship developed by Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, the elements of reflection on relationship which are found scattered in the Indian tradition were insufficient to help them solve the antimonies presented by that category. Their main difficulty is this : how can relationship be said truly of the Absolute without impairing its complete independence and transcendent simplicity ? Krishna's revealed secret implies that it can be but without explaining how it is possible. This explanation is reserved for the Believer's *fides quaerens*

S. C .12



*intellectum* : c for his understanding grappling with the mystery he believes. And in such a task Hindus and Christians can collaborate fruitfully.

The twelfth book of the *Mahabharata* confirms the key-importance attributed in this paper to Gita XVIII 65. It contains the allegory of the White Island ( XII 322-326 ) which is the final revelation vouchsafed to Yudhishthira, who, first among men, had dared to question the validity of the old idea of *moksa*, for in this timeless isolation he saw neither fruition nor highest bliss ( it may be remembered that Indra himself had expressed the same doubt in *Chandogya Upansad* 8, 11,2 ). The blessed islanders are the *ekantins* of Narayana : “ Devoted in their love ( *bhakti* ) they lick and lick the God whose face turns everywhere—the God who is like unto the sun endowed with all ( perfections ), from whom all the worlds were born ” ( 322, 12 ) As God is the true sun, they who reflect his glory shine like the moon ( 323, 31 ) or else they enter into Him in an ecstasy of adoration ( 323, 25 ). All are rapt in their contemplation of Him ( 323 32 ), He is the soul object of their mental worship, and this is most pleasing to Him ( 323, 32 ) They and they alone, “ become Brahman ” and filled with the love of God, are fit to enter into their Lord ( 326, 41 ) This is the pith and essence of all other teachings ( 326, 114 ) God indeed, is “ father, mother, and preceptor of the whole world, the holy and the eternal Lord Love him then, mighty-armed Yudhishthira ” ( 326, 120 )

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणि ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।  
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनजय ॥ ४.४१ ॥

The Bhagawadgita or the Celestial Song has been to me a perennial source of courage and inspiration. Whenever I am dispirited and dejected in life, I have made it a habit to recall to my memory some of the verses in the Gita which have always helped me to take heart again and follow the words of the Lord 'युध्यस्व विगतज्वर.' In such circumstances, it is difficult for me to lay my finger on one particular verse; but if at all I am required to make any choice, it will be in favour of the penultimate verse from Adhyaya IV quoted above.

I consider that the author of the Gita has, here, given me his ideal which will certainly stand the erring mortals in good stead throughout their lives. It is now well known that the emphasis of the Gitakara is on Karmayoga which in the apt words of Prof. Hiriyana is the path of '*renunciation in action and not of action*'. In the above mentioned verse, the author is unmistakably placing his finger on the equipment of an ideal Karmayogin. Every word is significant. The first word in the verse योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणि rightly hints at renouncing all actions in the true spirit of a Karmayogin. He may continue to undertake all actions, in fact he has to do so because philosophically न हि क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् is a fact. Thus योग or association with action being inevitable it is advisable to mix it with the spirit of सन्यास or renunciation; i. e. to undertake them without any desire of fruit thereof. In

other words the expression योगसन्यस्तकर्माणिम् speaks of a judicious mixture of the Path of Action and the Path of Knowledge combining the excellences of both and at the same time avoiding the extremes in both cases. All this cannot be achieved easily unless and until a person has known what is good and what is bad. It is necessary for him to develop his discriminative faculty; to appreciate his role in the ever rotating wheel of this world which is 'wonderfully various and variously wonderful'. He must know that 'In vain does that person live who does not contribute his quota to this ever moving Samsara'. Thus Jnana is a must for him; without which his actions are likely to be merely mechanical. Vidhi without Sraddha has always proved to be detrimental. Hence the expression ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् follows. The purpose of emphasising Jnana is evidently to indicate the exact way of undertaking actions and to dispel all doubts that may be lurking in the mind of the aspirant. It is a matter of experience that real knowledge goes a long way in building up the character of man. Thus with the first two expressions, the author of the Gita has already paved the way for the expression आत्मवन्तम् which, in fact, is the result that inevitably follows out of the first two expressions. When a person thus equips himself well, no actions can dare bind him down to the welter of this world i.e. कर्माणि न निबद्धन्ति. He may be engaging himself in action but as he has succeeded in rooting out the evil namely the desire for fruit, he remains over and above them untouched and untainted. In fact, the Karmayogin, in this verse, has reached what Gitakara has styled as ब्राह्मी स्थिति in chapter II and becomes a living embodiment of the truth illustrated with the help of that magnificent simile—

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं  
समुद्रमाप प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।  
तद्वत्कामा य प्रविशन्ति सर्वे  
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ २-७० ॥

Finally a question may be asked whether it is easy to achieve all this ? Certainly not. But that is the very reason for which I place the verse before me. I believe there is greater charm in approximating to this ideal than in actually achieving it. Is it not true that the charm always lies in the sap ? 'Not failure but

low aim is crime ' goes the proverb. Failure in achieving this ideal expressed so effectively here in this verse is, in my opinion, "an evidence of triumph "

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तत श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।

माधव. पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शखौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १-१४ ॥

Men are known to be of different types. Some persons, following modern psychology divide humanity into two kinds, introvert and extrovert. The introvert thinks and feels more and the extrovert acts more. Hinduism divides humanity into three classes—devotional, intellectual and active, each having one aspect of the Jiva in preponderance, those having more feeling are recommended the path of Devotion, those having inquisitiveness in greater proportion are recommended the path of Knowledge, and those who are most inclined to do some thing are recommended the path of Activity. Each individual is a mixture of these three aspects and while it is easier for each individual to walk on his own path, in the end he has to acquire all qualities and become perfect. Thus in a sense the path is one. Hence it is easy to know one's type and choose one's particular path of spiritual progress. To make this easier some people divide human temperament into seven classes instead of three. But it is a problematical question whether this division makes matters easier.

Personally I am not dominantly devotional. I consider myself an intellectual person. This may be due to my fundamental type or may be due to opportunities of education that I got in my present life. I do not know. But devotion, without intellect does not

much appeal to me and I am impelled hastily to dub devotional persons as “superstitious”.

But the following श्लोक in the Gita has a special appeal for me. It is the 14th verse in Adhyaya I. It runs as follows :

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।

माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शंखौ प्रदध्मतु ॥ १-१४ ॥

Though the Bhagawadgita deals with all aspects of men, every one can see that the above श्लोक contains no philosophy. It is merely a descriptive one. But that Shloka has a peculiar fascination for me!

It brings before the mind's eye, the big chariot drawn by white horses and the Great Teacher seated therein, ready to dispel all doubts of his pupils. This mental picture is full of inspiration for me. Such a mental picture produces the correct attitude for understanding the teachings of the Gita. The teachings are all difficult to understand and more difficult to put into practice. If any success is desired along that line, right attitude will be a great help. So I recommend that verse to all my readers.

To friends who spend some time in daily meditation, this verse will be specially useful. In the beginning of regular meditation, this Shloka should be silently repeated in the mind and a clear picture should be created before the mind's eye. This picture will produce the necessary atmosphere and attitude and in some cases at least may put the meditator in actual touch with Shri Krishna Himself.

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**Sri Shankaracharya, Sankeshwar, Karweer**

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ॥  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ २-४७ ॥

Every person should perform his duties—actions without desire for fruits under any circumstances whatsoever ( Karma means duty . action) By desire one can get fruit; but by duties—actions performed without desire one purifies one's mind—heart; and one can get Self-knowledge through purity of heart—mind. None should attach himself to inaction. Perform duty—action, but not for fruits for the sake of duties alone

Shrimat Bhagawadgita is the most popular and the brilliant gospel of religious teachings in the whole world It is one of the foremost writings on Vedanta (Vedanta Prasthana Trayi. 1 Upanishadas : Shravan-Prasthana, 2 Vedanta Sutras : Manana-Prasthana and 3. Bhagawadgita Nididhyasa—Prasthana )

मन एव मनुष्याणा कारण बन्धमोक्षयोः ।

( Mind is the cause of bondage of birth and death; and absolute freedom : Moksha )

Man is endowed with three faculties for attaining the goal of human life. The three faculties : 1. Prana-shakti ( vital energy ), 2 Vak-shakti ( power of speech and expression ) and 3. Manasa-shakti ( Mental Power ), constitute the triple source of energy of human existence Mental power is supreme amongst these three Hence we have to see what this mind is made up of.

Every human being is mentally equipped with a number

of emotional and intellectual qualities. The often quoted षड्विकार's roughly exhaust the various channels through which the mental energy flows out.

Sexual instinct--wish (काम), anger (क्रोध), greed (लोभ), allure-ment (मोह), arrogance (मद), and jealousy (मत्सर) are the six so-called enemies of human mind. The desire to profess and show off oneself (hypocrisy, or sanctimony i. e. दम्भ) bluntness of behaviour, (pride, haughtiness i. e. दर्प), perverted conception about one's duties etc. constitute the (आसुरी) qualities. Fearlessness (निर्भयता), purity (सात्त्विकता), gentleness (उदारता), balance between intellect and action (ज्ञानकर्मतारतम्य), forgiveness (क्षमाशीलता), humility (नम्रता, लीनता), kindness (औदार्य), generosity दया and a craving for social well-being (सर्वभूतदया, सर्वजनहितेच्छा) constitute the divine qualities or the virtues viz Daivi-sampat. A human being is generally a mixture of both good and bad qualities mentioned above. These qualities are of human mind.

कामः सकल्पः विचिकित्सा श्रद्धा अश्रद्धा

धृतिः अधृतिः ऋहीः धीः भीः इति एतत् सर्वं मनः एव ॥

बृहदारण्यकोपनिषत् अ. १ ब्राह्मण ५ मन्त्र ॥ ३ ॥

(1) Kamah :- desire, wish, 2 Sankalpah :- will, volition, resolve, 3. Vichikitsa :- doubt, uncertainty, 4 Shraddha .- trust, faith, belief, confidence, 5. Ashraddha :- want of faith ( in ), scepticism, 6. Dhritih :- firmness, steadiness, constancy, courage; 7. Adhritih :-want of firmness or control, inconsistency unhappiness; 8. Hreehi :- shame, bashfulness, modesty, 9. Dhih :- intellect, understanding; 10. Bhih :- Fear, dread, fright, terror; all these are mental faculties - This is the nature-disposition-character of mind.

### “ World ” a combination of Good and Bad

This universe is composed of good and bad, beautiful and ugly, pure and impure constituents. The rose plant possesses a fragrant flower but at the same time is accompanied by thorns on its stem. It is the privilege of man to select the good, pure and the beautiful and reject the bad, the impure and the ugly in every walk of his life. This capacity of man to select good against bad becomes more difficult in his mental world. The



impurities of the mind that are inseparably mixed with the goodness like water in the milk, dishearten a man in his attempt of pursuing the best in his mental world. It is this incapacity of man that makes him a prey of the dualities of life, like happiness and sorrow.

सुखस्य अनन्तरं दुःखं दुःखस्य अनन्तरं सुखम्

Sorrow (grief, unhappiness) comes after happiness : unhappiness comes after happiness

‘ सुखं पाहता जवापाडे दुःखं पर्वताएवढे । ’ —Says Tukaram

i.e. Happiness is as small as a barley seed and unhappiness is as great as the Himalayas

Generally all human beings are buried under the numerous problems and anxieties in the life. Greed, animosity and allurement have an upper hand only on account of the weakness of the mind. Our mind is always engrossed with the memories of the past and the present. We have to learn to introspect and understand the movements of the mind objectively. Man has to learn to think dispassionately and arrive at decisions fearlessly on the basis of an objective outlook. The impressions of the past, the influence of the social customs, and habits should not be allowed to give rise to the पङ्क्ति, which are always impatient to have supremacy over the human mind. We should be watchful against the weakness of hypocrisy in point of cultivating virtues in life according to the standard code of ethics. To achieve such a state of mental equilibrium we have to train ourselves to be consciously alert about the duties that we have to perform in the circumstances we are placed in.

1 Satyam —imperishable, permanent, undecaying 2 Jnanam .— knowing or becoming acquainted with Atman—Brahman 3 Anantam .—endless, infinite, boundless, inexhaustible 4 Brahma —the supreme being, impersonal and divested of all quality and action, the all-pervading soul and spirit of the universe

Many people are anxious to understand the Nature of Reality, truth and spirituality but our understanding of the basis of Reality gets blurred and confused on account of the confusion and doubt created by our own mind like the silken threads binding

the silk-worm Thus we have to face disappointment in life. Many a time the mental activity ceases to function and man feels completely helpless. In such moments of utter despondency we should learn to unburden the mind of its anxieties and worries by making it calm, quiet, peaceful and full of poise. Such a state of mind is akin to the spiritual or the Divine equanimity in man

### **Mental Power**

The world we live in is a bundle of social and individual problems. The solution of the problems is possible only through the development of a cultured mind. The culture of the mind is to be judged from its breadth, generosity, kindness and affection and devotion to God. The mind that is engrossed in the happiness of flesh cannot understand the nature of higher strata of cultural and spiritual ways of life. The researcher or a Sadhaka in the mental realm has to unburden his mind of the stress and strain of sexual aspirations. He has to develop a mental condition which is free from thought, both good and bad. It is only a mind vacated of the lower emotions and unholy thoughts that becomes fit for the realisation of Divinity. All our thoughts take their shape through the medium of language which is made up of words. The experience of the spirit and the realisation of Divinity are matters beyond the reach of thought and descriptive language. नि शब्द ब्रह्म उच्यते । (Brahman is in-expressible in words and mind. What is not Brahman can be expressed in words but Brahman cannot be expressed in words.) The Mind can observe through the medium of thoughts and hence is incapable of the observations beyond the reach of thoughts. Therefore such a realisation is possible for a unified, spiritualised supra-physical mind alone स्वेन स्वरिमन् स्वयम्, स्वानुभूतम् (By oneself, within oneself, one is one's own experience or cognition). In this way the mind can enjoy the bliss of the Brahman only after the extinction of the sense of mine.

निर्ममो निरहकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ २-७१ ॥

He attains peace who has no attachment and who is free from the sense of "I" and "Mine"

## Mental Freedom and Stability

Everything requires some place (space) for stability of existence. Nothing can sustain itself without a place to stand on. If our mind is pre-occupied by numerous currents of thoughts and feelings there would be no room for spirituality and God in our hearts. Hence the foremost duty of a man consists in making room for good thoughts by driving away the evil ones. The mind which is potentially capable of rising to the status of Divinity must have an opportunity to evolve itself to its sublime state. Such a mind becomes fearless, desireless and pure and is capable of enjoying the presence of the Spiritual Self.

### Work is Worship and Duty is God

The Bhagawadgita proclaims that everybody has the right of action alone and not to its fruit. We must become genuinely dutiful. There should be no attachment to inaction.

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छत समा ॥ ईशावास्योपनिषत्-२

Do wish to live a hundred years performing duties here  
We have to attend to our duties till the last breath.

केल्याने होत आहे रे । आधी केलेच पाहिजे ॥

यत्न तो देव जाणावा । अतरी धरिता बरे ॥

श्रीसमर्थ रामदास ।

Activity is an essential in spiritual life as in our daily, political, social and family life.

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ६-३५ ॥

The mind can be restrained by Abhyasa (practice), Vairagya (dispassion).

From the point of view of spiritual life Shrimat Bhagawadgita emphasises the elimination of the desire of the results or fruit. Important quotations from the Bhagawadgita in this regard are given below.

1 Completely cast off all the desires of the mind. Be satisfied in the Self, by the Self.

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ॥ २-५५ ॥

2. Be free from attachment, fear and anger  
वीतरागभयक्रोधः ॥ २-५६ ॥
3. Be free from attraction and repulsion.  
रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु ॥ २-६४ ॥
4. The man who abandons all desires and has no sense of  
“ I ” and “ Mine ” attains peace  
विहाय कामान् सर्वान् यः पुमाश्चरति निस्पृहः ।  
निर्ममो निरहकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ २-७१ ॥
5. Free from attachment, fear and anger  
वीतरागभयक्रोधः ॥ ४-१० ॥
6. Devoid of all desires and purposes  
यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसकल्पवर्जिताः ॥ ४-१९ ॥
7. One must be able to withstand the impulse born of  
desires and anger  
शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक् शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।  
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ ५-२३ ॥
8. Be free from longing for all objects of desire  
निस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यः ॥ ६-१८ ॥
9. Be free from desires and anger.  
कामक्रोधवियुक्तानाम् ॥ ५-२६ ॥
10. Abandon without reserve all desires born of Sankalpa  
i.e. imagination.  
संकल्पप्रभवान् कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानिषेधतः ॥ ६-२४ ॥
11. Be devoid of desire and attachment  
बलं बलवता चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ॥ ७-११ ॥
12. Abandon lust, anger, and greed  
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत् त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ १६-२१ ॥
13. Be free from all Dharmas : Give up all actions righte-  
ous or unrighteous. Be absolutely free from all actions Be  
one with Brahma Get established in Brahma. *Aham Brahma*  
*Asmi* etc teaches Kama-tyaga  
सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य ॥ १८-६६ ॥

14 Abandon the fruit of action.

युक्तं कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा ॥ ५-१२ ॥

15 Perform your duty without depending on the fruits of actions VI-1

अनाश्रितं कर्मफलम् ॥ ६-१ ॥

16 Always do perform your duties without attachment

असक्तं सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ॥ ३ - १९ ॥

17 Abandon the fruits of all your actions etc. Teaches us Karmaphala-tyaga

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागम् । १८-२ ॥

These lines from the Gita recommend action based on sacrifice and surrender. It is not possible for every man to achieve this state of mind. Yet, such an attempt if rigidly pursued is capable of yielding the desired results.

### Every Act as Service of God

The omni-present God is witness to every act of ours. Hence every act performed with a sense of dedication becomes a service of the divine.

1 The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings

ईश्वर सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ॥ १८-६१ ॥

ममैवाशो जीवलोके जीवभूतं जनातनम् ॥ १५-७ ॥

2 A portion of the Lord becomes a living soul in the world of life. The individual soul or Jiva is a ray of the Lord.

All our actions performed with this sense of dedication culminate in spiritual worship.

Shankara ( Shankaracharya ) says in Shiva-manasa-puja .

आत्मा त्वा गिरिजामति सहचरा. प्राणा. शरीरं गृहम्

पूजा ते विषयोपभोगरचना निद्रा समाधिस्थिति ॥

सचार पदयोः प्रदक्षिणाविधिः स्तोत्राणि सर्वा गिरो ।

यद् यद् कर्म करोमि तत् तत् अखिलं शम्भो तवाराधनम् ॥

O Shambho, Shiva-Shankara, you are the soul, intellect, knowledge, understanding is Gija-Parvati, five life-winds are companions or friends, the body is the house the arrangement of the objects

of senses for enjoyments is the worship of God. sleep is the Samadhi ( abstract meditation ); the moving on foot is the Pradakshina to God ( Pradakshina : —circumambulation so that the right side is always turned towards the god-person or object circumambulated ); All speech the Stotias ( praise or eulogy ), in short, whatever I do or perform, is, O Lord, God, your adoration-worship.

If every human being performs his duty selflessly and without any expectation of a reward the purpose of this article stands fulfilled.

In conclusion We pray to Shree Sharadamba Chandramaulishwara to bestow this wisdom of action on all and make the whole world peaceful and contented

सर्वेऽत्र सुखिनः सन्तु सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥

In this world all should enjoy prosperity and happiness; all must be free from sickness and troubles and no one should be unhappy.

Om Tat Sat

ॐ तत् सत्

जनताजनार्दनार्पणमस्तु---

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत् तत्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।  
वेत्ति यन्न न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ ६ - २१ ॥

All creatures attempt till the end of their lives, to avoid pain and obtain permanent and greatest Bliss But do they get real happiness by these attempts? No, they do not All living beings exert in their own ways to accrue happiness but they do not get the same There must be some mistake somewhere. Let us see what it is

As is indicated above Lord Shri Krishna has said in Adhyaya VI " Where he experiences that endless bliss beyond the senses which can be grasped by reason alone; wherein established he swerves not from the truth "

The meaning of this verse is that the bliss, which is endless and which can be grasped by reason alone and which is beyond the senses is experienced by the ज्ञानी when he is firmly established in his soul ( Atman ) and does not swerve from Him

Let us consider where the mistake comes in

1. One does not reach the goal if he is ignorant of its nature.

2 The goal is not reached even when the means to it are not known.

3. The goal is not reached also when a person is not properly qualified to get at it

Now let us consider first what ignorance of the real nature of Bliss ( goal ) is

Except the one who has realised ब्रह्मन् nobody in the world is satisfied with what he has got in his life according to his प्रारब्ध Karma. Everyone desires to get better enjoyment, either in the world or beyond. Such a desire is seen not only in human beings but even in animals, beasts and birds. And so everyone attempts to reach that situation which he considers "better" with such means as he considers proper and thus spends his whole life in pursuing those means. "Better" is a relative term. It is very difficult to define the "best" happiness. All men are happy as well as unhappy in some respects. But nobody feels that he has fulfilled his life's mission. One says he is completely happy, when one secures some benefit beyond one's expectations; but this happiness is only transitory. The gain of illusory objects does give some satisfaction for some time, but such satisfaction also is only transitory.

The real gain and real fulfilment of one's life's mission come only when one feels that one has nothing to gain and nothing to pursue. Bhagawan Sri Krishna says :

यं लब्ध्वा चापर लाभ मान्यते नाधिक ततः । ६-२२

The ज्ञानी who has realised Atman has nothing more to gain and one who is fully satisfied with the nectar of ज्ञान has fulfilled his life's mission and has nothing "to do" any more. Every living being feels that he should get the greatest bliss and should not get any pain in any form.

This state of highest bliss without any adulteration of pain can be said to be the best and happiest condition as this covers all the desires of all living beings. This is called "common desire".

We have defined this "Highest happy state" by means of arguments and inferences. But no human being is sure if such a state in fact exists or is probable and if so what are the means of its realisation. This is beyond man's reason. And scripture (Shashtra) is that, which shows what is unknown and is beyond human reason. Vedanta maintains that this highest bliss does exist and calls it मोक्ष. There is only one वस्तु which is Highest Bliss without any mixture of pain. It is called परमात्मा, देव or ब्रह्म.

In short Highest Bliss मोक्ष, ब्रह्म, परमात्मा are all synonymous terms. The गीता describes this nature of the greatest Atman.



as सुखमात्यन्तिक यत्तत् । When once this nature of मोक्ष or परमात्मा is finally decided as the fountain-head of all happiness, the शास्त्रs have shown various means of its realisation. परमात्मा is the only abode of happiness and that is identical with जीव "individual soul"

But जीव believes through mistake, that there is happiness in worldly objects. In fact these objects are not the "means" nor "Happiness" is their "end".

But through this mistaken belief men exert till the end of their lives to secure these worldly objects and pursue them

ज्ञानेश्वर महाराज says

तैसा हृदयी आतु मी धर्मु । असता सर्व सुखाचा आरामु ।  
कि भ्रातासि कामु । विषयावरि ॥ ज्ञानेश्वरी ॥ ९-५९ ॥

"I ( Lord ) am the supreme happiness and rest and I dwell in the hearts of all beings. Yet the deluded ones hanker after objects of senses ( in search of happiness ) wrongly thinking that happiness would be found therein

Our aim is to secure ब्रह्मज्ञान i. e. to get at the Highest Atman who is Happiness incarnate. ( One must take for granted some sort of delusion to get what is ever present and to avoid what is ever absent ) Thus to miss this aim is "ignorance of the Aim".

The Vedas say "तमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्यमेति" i. e. only with the knowledge of this great Atman one goes beyond death and by no other means. This word "only" (एव) excludes any other aim. Thus "only the Great Atman is the Happiness" and the aim of all

Now let us see what is meant by "ignorance of means".

The Atman which is Happiness Itself is the aim. We are not sure if "Karma" "devotion" or "Knowledge" is the means to reach this aim

(A) One who neglects the "means" does not get at the "end".

(B) One who pursues "wrong means" does not reach the "end"

(C) Even if proper means are used yet if they are not sufficient enough ( to reach the aim ) even then one does not reach the 'aim'

(D) Thus “proper means” when fully and sufficiently used take one to the “End”.

The only definite means to realise Atman i. e. Happiness is its knowledge. The Vedas have ruled out all other means saying

“ नान्यं पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय । ”

There exists no other road to salvation (except आत्मज्ञान).

But people do not follow this way. On the other hand they attempt to gather objects of senses. How would then they get happiness? Thus one must obtain this knowledge of the Atman and it must develop into realisation in the heart. Then only this knower of ब्रह्मन् becomes ब्रह्मन् itself i. e. Bliss Itself. “ ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्म एव भवति । ”

Now let us see how the aspirant (अधिकारी) lacks in his qualifications to reach ब्रह्मन्.

Having realised that the Great Atman who is Bliss Itself is the goal and aim and knowledge is the path to reach it, and if even after all attempts the aim is not reached, it follows that the साधक is not well qualified i. e. he is not a proper अधिकारी. One who aspires to obtain मोक्ष, salvation, must observe all the necessary rules to get at it. These “rules” are as under :

- 1 One must purify one's heart by means of observance of all rites (कर्माणि) enjoined by the Shastras
- 2 One's heart must be steady and firm by thorough devotion.
- 3 There must be a keen desire to obtain आत्मज्ञान and so one must secure विवेक (Discernment), वैराग्य (dispassion), शम, दम etc. six vows, and finally yearning for salvation मुमुक्षा. After this one must devote oneself to listening (श्रवण), thinking (मनन), concentration (निदिध्यासन) and search of the Highest Entity (तत्त्वपदार्थगोधन).

Such a man is only really qualified to get this आत्मज्ञान and none else. He realises the ब्रह्म, experiences it and finally becomes Bliss Itself. This is expressed in the verse सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत् तत् .. ६-२१

In short Atman is Bliss, to realise “It” is the first and foremost duty of all human beings

This is the teaching of the भगवद्गीता.

Shri Jnaneshwar Maharaj says also in his ज्ञानेश्वरी at the end (in पसायदान) while begging for the “grace” of his Guru in

the form of the "All-pervading God" requests that the whole world should get the "Happiness".

किबहुना सर्वसुखी । पूर्णा होऊनि तिही लोकी ।

भजिजो आदिपुरुषी । अखडित ॥ ( १८-१७७८ सरकारी प्रकाशन )

Shri Jnaneshwar says "What else should I ask ?" The inmates of all the three worlds be full of Bliss of the Great Atman and they should ceaselessly devote themselves to the Great Atman who is the cause of the creation.

So also in अमृतानुभव too he says

म्हणोनि ज्ञानदेवो म्हणे । अनुभवामृते येणे । सणु भोगिजे सणे । विश्वाचेति ॥

"The whole universe may happily enjoy that Bliss for all time "

In चागदेवपासण्टी also he says

तियापरी जो इया । दर्पण करील ओविया । तो आत्मा एवढिया । मिळेल सुखा ॥

One who would make use of these verses of mine as a mirror i e who will think over them as a means to the knowledge of ब्रह्मन् will reach the "Atman" who is the extreme and limitless Bliss

And thus गीता says

सुखमात्यतिक यत् तत् ।

Thus I close this article having pointed out what our true "aim" ( साध्य ) is, what the "means" ( साधन ) to reach the same are and who is "qualified" ( अधिकारी ) to attain it.

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असशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।  
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥

I have been asked to state what portion of the Bhagawad-gita—which particular stanza or saying—inspired me. The query assumes that mine has been an inspired life—a highly doubtful proposition. I am not aware of, much less do I claim, any inspiration worth the name. So I shall try to answer the above query without prejudice to this frank disclaimer. May be that others know more about me than I know about my self. Even if there be any signs of inspiration in my life and conduct, I must state forthwith that that inspiration has not come from the Gita or for that matter, from any other holy book. So far as I can recollect I have had no special attraction for any scriptures, Hindu or other. But comparatively speaking the attributes of the Bhakta (devotee) attracted me more than those of the Sthitaprajna (the man of steadfast intelligence), and to be frank the sermon on the mount appealed to me more strongly than any passage of the Gita. My inspiration has come if at all, from the lives of Shivaji, Tilak, Savarkar, Gandhi, Vinoba and last but not the least my own humble mother. Next will come the songs of Tukaram and Ramdas and the speeches of Vivekananda and Ramtirtha.

While still a boy at school, taking my first lessons in Sanskrit I took to the study of the Gita with a fervent mind, but I was more disappointed than attracted. It was a hard task to

wade through the armed ranks of the Kauravas and Pandavas. With sheer patience and perseverance I progressed to the second chapter again to be held up by the high philosophy of existence, non-existence and immortality of the soul. In despair I turned to the four - volume - commentary of Prof. Bhanu with the only effect that my confusion was worse confounded.

So I gave up the study of the Gita and did not return to it until Lokamanya Tilak's *Gitarahasya* was published at the end of 1914. Even then I went through Tilak's able and learned exposition with great interest and profit but gave little attention to the text.

But I came into daily contact with the Gita by way of recitation and perusal when I joined Gandhiji in his Ashram at Sabarmati and there came into contact with Gita personified viz. Vinobaji. I was fascinated and greatly profited by his occasional discourses on the Gita, Upanisads and Brahmasutras. By that time, however, I had passed the formative stage of my life, though in a sense I am being formed and reformed every minute of my life and hope to do so to the last breath.

But though I do not claim on my own, any inspiration from the Gita, I must in all humility and gratitude admit that I have been drawing my sustenance from the Gita's method of persistence (अभ्यासयोग). The teaching of the Gita has been variously named as Karmayoga, Jnanayoga, Anasaktiyoga, Paramatmayoga etc. by various eminent commentators and it certainly contains all these. But it also contains much more. Personally I value her *Abhyasayoga* in as much as it has been sustaining me in the odd endeavours that I have been undertaking throughout my whole life-career.

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ६-३५ ॥

Control can be achieved on the (recalcitrant) mind through persistence or repetition and non-attachment.

अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥ १२-९ ॥

If you wish to achieve Divinity, practise *Abhyasa*.

*Abhyasayoga* is Gita's own word. Phrases like अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः (perfected through a series of lives) and बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते (at the close of a number of lives) occur every now and then and sustain the faltering and fatigued pilgrim.

If Right knowledge and Right action be the attributes of the Siddha ( Perfect ) who are few if any, sustained effort is for numberless Sadhakas (apprentices) like myself. Their charter is

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ६-४० ॥

None who works in good faith can go the wrong way.

The journey may be long and weary but the Divine mother off and on whispers into our ears "Don't lose heart, dear ones. Try again; persist; success is waiting for you "

No wonder if the accomplished actor-singer in the musical drama be applauded with "Once more" for his melodious song by the pleased audience. But the Gita shouts out " once more" not to the accomplished actor but rather to the nervous novice who falters and fumbles in the midst of the performance and gives up the attempt in despair. "Never mind" whispers the kind mother, "Better luck next time. One day the public will applaud your music no less than that of the most eminent actor". How fortunate that I have been receiving such unmerited appreciation and encouragement from the Gita ever since the beginning of my obscure career.

And my own experience bears ample testimony to the truth of her assurances More than thirty years ago a large number of us Satyagrahi prisoners in Ratnagiri Jail, all of them caste Hindus voluntarily took up scavenging as jail task Somehow the whole credit of the venture—or discredit —went to me After my release from jail, I was received by a prominent citizen of Dapoli with the words " So long we used to be told that Gandhi moulds heroes out of clay, but now we discover that he makes pigs out of men " But the Gita's charter sustained me and I persisted The jail venture was screened away from public gaze, but I also did Bhangi work in the streets of Malvan and was applauded by the good-natured public there Emboldened I ventured a couple of years later, in Dapoli itself, openly to flay a dead buffalo and escort the hide to a local tanner's Derision, scorn, obloquy were once more showered upon me from all sides, but I too had, by that time developed sufficiently tough skin. So heedless of public censure I persisted—both in scavenging and flaying and have been amply rewarded by the Abhyasayoga. Whatever reputation I now enjoy, either within

or without my district, is mainly due to the fact that though a Brahmin by birth I am both Bhangi and Chamai by choice.

Lately I have come out with the novel scheme of *Chalanashuddhi* or perishable currency I have become the laughing stock of the learned and the high-placed, but that only serves to make me firmer and firmer Persist, repeat, hammer has been my motto Confident of ultimate success I have been persistently repeating my slogan and already there are signs of truer appreciation of my scheme, which is destined in the near future to be universally approved and adopted and then change the face of the Globe

The divine Mother (Gita) not only sustains, she also makes me firmer and leads me further and farther. Thus quite recently—and abruptly—she has given me the courage to put my sole reliance on God in my propagation of *Chalanashuddhi* Till recently my *Chalanashuddhi* tours used to be supported and countenanced by eminent leaders and co-workers went in advance and made preparations for the success of my tours and for my own personal comforts But now I go round, from village to village, unprovided and unaccompanied, unknown and unfamiliar, with God alone as my precursor, companion and supporter For the last twenty years I have been aspiring to attain the status of a Bhikshu (mendicant) The spirit was willing but the flesh turned out to be weak But at long last I have set myself to the spread of the Divine message of *Chalanashuddhi* with greater determination, devotion and cool confidence than ever before—with “Heart within and God overhead”

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उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।  
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ६-६ ॥

Every line of the Gita is important. It is a unique Gospel of knowledge, love and work. It is a scripture of spiritual Socialism in which the collective life of humanity is an efflorescence of the equal spirit. The verse quoted above, brings out the substance of the whole Gita. The fifth and the sixth chapters form the heart and brain of the Gita.

Let a man raise himself to Divinity by self-effort. Let him not lower the magnanimity of the inner self. The self is the friend of oneself and the self is the enemy of oneself. The self 'I' is the quintessence of our being. It is the heart-dweller. It is the life of lives. It is the fountain of power, peace and bliss. It is by realising the Self—'I' that Ramadasa, Ramakrishna, Ramana and Aurobindo became powerful personalities. One must not lower the self, and become diffident. We must be confident of the self-power. Self is a friend of those that are conscious of its power. Self is an enemy of the ignorant, arrogant beings that are blind to its light and bliss. Self-heroes are the best among men.

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणा ।  
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषा ॥ ५-१७ ॥

Pure souls do not return to lower nature, for their life is purified and their sins dispelled by Self-knowledge. Their



intellect is absorbed in that Supreme self. Their being is firmly established in the self—"I". Their very being is That. That is their absorbing interest.

Their life is an outflowing of the Atman which is the Man within man. To be That, to feel 'That' in all is the way to peace and bliss. To love all as equal self is real *Love*; to know the Self and all as 'That' is real *Knowledge*. To act in that consciousness consecrating to That act and fruit is real Karma. To live in Communion with the Self is real Yoga. All other stanzas of the Gita form an elaboration of these two verses.

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उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसायदयेत् ॥  
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ६-५ ॥

Life is not a vale of tears, nor a dale of delight. It is not a hollow bubble; never is it an idle dream. In general the web of life is of a mingled yarn. It can, however, be distressful or blissful as we choose to make it. It may be a desert waste or a green garden.

Life is the richest of treasures; its potentialities are vastly varied and inexhaustibly immense. The harum-scarum waste of its energy is a great sin. Man is wantonly and pertinaciously doing it. Sanity would come to him if he only cares to listen to the counsel of the wise, and abides by the dictates of the Vedas and Shastras. The course of disinterested action and the code of unslurred character companioned with Systematic and soul-stirring study cleanses man's mind of its dross and canker. God is mirrored in the transparent mind. Consequently man knows the transcendent glory of the Supreme in its native grandeur and flings himself at His feet, heart and soul. Thus in the fulness of time the spiritual exercitant realises God and reaches Him.

The philosophy of the Gita is far from being murky, musty and mysty as it is wrongly thought to be.

The Bhagawan asks us to shape our life with scrupulous care, to spin its rough fibres into a superfine yarn. He wants us to make most and best of our life. Life is a sacred burden that every man must bear and bear it solemnly and at the same time

smilingly He should steadily progress onward and upward till the final goal is reached He lives longest who thinks wisely, feels nobly and acts righteously

Man should shake off his sloth, dedicate every moment of his life to good and useful acts and also try to redeem mis-spent time For want of a sound philosophy to guide him, he only makes straggling attempts to get on; evidently he cannot make steady progress Every moment he chops and changes

He will do well to pray to God to disperse all his sins and wean him from all perversions Let him try to detect every failing that lurks within and every stain glossed over. He should soonest realise the fundamental and foundational truth that man lives and thrives each moment of his existence on God's bounteous grace He therefore must needs consign himself to God and fold all his wills in His Let him avoid sinful thought, guileful word, and hurtful deed Whenever he raises his voice to God, let him lift his heart also This done, in due time, man will be able to pray with a throbbing heart, streaming eyes and thrilling body. If grand thoughts are incessantly instilled into our mind and rammed down into the inmost recess of our heart by competent Gurus, lukewarm hearts begin to glow with fervent love, scintillate and shine with spiritual resplendence

The man who enters into closest communion with God has a calm and unclouded mind His life will be marked by sweet fear, sober liberty and simple heart No chasm separates his professions and actions Earthly joys grow dim, its glories pass away; change and decay are the fate of all things we see But the saintly man attains to a frame of mind where ills have no weight, tears no bitterness, destitution no sting, death no dread; where blasts of discord cease and waves of strife are stilled and gloom is chased away

Undying faith in God stamps out all sins, allays all fears, dispels vexing thoughts, bolsters up drooping spirits and soothes the sore mind Earthly joys no longer beguile him On the contrary he valiantly sustains his loss He never shuns sorrow and suffering He has firm trust in the maxim that the richest gain of the flesh is the heaviest loss to the spirit and heaviest loss to the flesh is the richest gain to the spirit He is at home in the magnificent art of cheering the gloomy days and sweetening the bitter cup of life A godly man knows perfectly well that

every Jiva is spiritually eternal. His spiritual life has no beginning and no end. The physical body that each Jiva assumes is evanescent. It is born, changes and perishes. Jiva's leaving the old body and assuming the new one can be very aptly compared to the body's leaving old garments and putting on new ones. Hence birth and death do not affect an enlightened man in the least.

A true devotee likes to remain a devotee at all times, even in the highest state of bliss, i.e. emancipation. Devotion gives him the greatest joy which he is most reluctant to part with. Deva and Jiva, according to him, are fundamentally and radically different. In mundane existence—in general—there is no harmony between Deva and Jiva. A devotee makes his best and persistent efforts to attune his will to the will of the Supreme. When he succeeds in achieving that attunement, he gets spiritual redemption—whereupon complete, absolute and eternal harmony will prevail.

God-consciousness and god-centered devotion will further strengthen his powers of head and heart so that he has a fully bloomed personality. He is far above all sorrows that wring the human heart.

A devotee of God to the core as he is, he runs to the rescue of the wronged. He is aflame with righteous indignation at the tyrant's inhuman ways. Though he is far from being bellicose, he is up in arms to defend the aggrieved. Wars are waged by him for the restoration of spiritual values. Nothing is done with indiscretion, excitement and in a fit of spleen. He has faith in Svadharma, never will he for the life of him quit it. Once he gets into the battlefield with a clean conscience he is ruthless, relentless and remorseless till enemies yield. He fights against them tooth and nail, hip and thigh, hammer and tongs. In doing his duty, he chastens the wrong-doer, arrests his moral ruin and saves the innocent.

The path of love is the crowning grace and the very flower of the philosophy of the Gita. Its beauty is that it is open to all. Even hewers of wood and drawers of water can cultivate it, while they follow their own avocations disinterestedly and dutifully. Thus the Gita is a quarry of exquisite thoughts and a mine of immutable maxims, that are thousand times more worth than mines of gold.

यत्त योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्त पार्थो धनुर्धर ।  
तत्त श्रीविजयो भूतिध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ १८-७८ ॥

To select a single verse from the Gita which has influenced one most is as difficult as selecting the most beautiful petal in the lotus. As the beauty of the lotus is collectively determined by all the petals, so does the Gita form an integral whole. If therefore one is compelled to make a choice of one verse, one would do so more on psychological grounds than on strictly logical ones. As a matter of fact, in spite of the intellectual points of appeal that abound in the Gita, its appeal as a whole is more to the heart than to the head. And even though there have been theoretical discussions on the teaching of the Gita, we cannot account for its popularity, on those comparatively prosaic grounds. The Gita enters into the life of a person, it becomes a living truth for him only because it presents itself to him not as a bare and dry piece of logical argumentation, but as a confidential advice which God has in person given to the man.

I have chosen to write on the last quarter of the last verse of the Gita. On such perhaps extra-logical grounds Sanjaya it appears to me, has given the substance of the teaching of the Gita in these words :

“ In my opinion . Morality is steadfast. ” ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ।

These words have been ringing in my ears more than any others. The following discussion is only an elaboration of the

association of ideas round these words. I do not know whether these ideas could be justified on considerations which a historian, a Sanskritist, an Indologist or a speculative metaphysician, may be in position to advance. I am only giving vent to the interpretation which somehow I have come to put upon these words.

The Gita is not a treatise on Metaphysics but mainly a piece of moral advice which a friend, philosopher and guide in the form of God has given to a human devotee. There are of course metaphysical ideas of paramount importance repeatedly referred to throughout the Gita, but the chief object of the work is not to solve a problem of theoretical metaphysics as to solve the most practical, even a casuistical, problem of moral life. To be or not to be, to fight or not to fight, that's the problem. The Gita begins with a morally dilemmatic situation presented in the most dramatic form. Arjuna is in a fix regarding the conflict of duties, virtues and values. Such conflicts are normally experienced by any common man who has a moral sense or conscience. A case of conscience must be met on moral grounds, and its solution must be in the delineation of morally righteous action.

Of course, if the answer is not to be provisional or haphazard, the moral question will take one inevitably to the perennial problems of Philosophy. Science of ethics is not a self-complete system. It has to be founded on a comprehensive view of the universe. Usually we find ethical systems founded on Naturalistic, Humanistic or Absolutistic philosophy. This is a broad division under which all the philosophical systems may be subsumed. The naturalistic ethics will tend to be Hedonistic (भोगवाद), the humanistic ethics will tend to be Utilitarian (उपयुक्ततावाद) or Practicalist (व्यवहारवाद) and the absolutistic ethics will tend to be Perfectionistic (पूर्णतावाद). The Gita view is perfectionistic but subsumes axiologically the other viewpoints under it. Each of the views has its merits as well as points of limitations. The Gita view is not hedonistic, but neither is it anti-hedonistic or extremely puritanical. Its ethics is not negativistic, but positively valuational. Its practicalism has no fear of falling down to selfish expediency, nor its utilitarianism merely social or worldly wisdom. Its perfectionism is not static idealism, but is compatible with the dynamic life of the world. It takes an integral attitude of harmonising the life of the spirit with the life of the world. The spring of the

moral life is in the spirit but its demonstration is in the world of flesh and blood

In determining the nature of ultimate reality, which renders the human moral situation meaningful, the Gita has followed a two-pronged method of analysis. By analysing the objective world outside, it makes a discrimination between the mutable (क्षर) and the immutable (अक्षर) and by analysing the subjective world inside, it makes a discrimination between the knower (क्षेत्रज्ञ) and the known (क्षेत्र). Green, in his 'Prolegomena to Ethics' had in modern times followed a similar method in discovering the spiritual principle both in nature and in knowledge. For the Gita also Aksara is the spiritual principle in nature and Kshetrajna is the spiritual principle in knowledge. These are not two but one. It is to realise this that all human effort should be done. That is the essence of morality. Morality cannot be grounded in a naturalistic metaphysics, because nature itself reveals the spiritual principle. Nor again, can our morals, be grounded in humanism, for man himself is, in reality, spirit. No secular morality therefore is secure. It lacks in self-sufficiency. Nor can it be self-explanatory. It does not provide a criterion of intrinsic value, nor of gradational valuation. Thus the Gita provides a firm foundation of moral life in its Absolutism of the Spirit. When Gurudeo Ranade interprets the Gita as a Philosophy of God-realisation, or when Shri Aurobindo emphasises that the Gita does not teach human action but divine action, both are at one in putting their finger upon the spiritual worth and meaning of human moral life. The intrinsically valuable end of the moral effort (Sadhana) is God-realisation or self-realisation. The path that leads to this realisation is gradual emancipation of the spirit from matter. But this is not to be achieved through the exclusion or negation of matter, but through its divinisation. A divine orientation is to be given to what begins as a human action. The realisation of Godhood is not the end that puts an end to the moral activity. The very effort that has been spent, becomes so very perfect that it does not require any more effort to be good. Action that was originally hardship, now becomes a habit. Habit is second nature. Perfection makes goodness spontaneous. The initial hesitation of moral life is transformed into its steadfastness. The realised end becomes the supreme means of the continuous and immutable moral life.

The realisation of effortlessness ( नैष्कर्म्य ) in the effort ( कर्म ) is the tact ( कौशल ) characterised as 'yoga' taught in the Gita. Neither inaction, nor bad action, nor interested action is desirable. Inaction ( अकर्म ) is impossible as it goes against the law of Nature ( प्रकृति ). It indicates barrenness of will amounting to indolence. Idleness is moral inertia which springs from *tamas*. Lack of will to be good may often spurt in bad action ( विकर्म ). That is the very opposite of moral virtue. Action done with desire may have all the shades between evil of hedonism and altruistic good. It may be motivated with the selfish pleasure of the moment, or of calculating interest of the life as a whole of the individual ego. Its object may, in one case, be more enlightened self-interest which may do some good to others without any positive desire to do so or it may have wider humanitarian ends in view. But so long as the eye is upon any kind of secular fruit either for oneself or for all there is a possibility of disappointment caused by the failure in gaining the fruits. For, the human efforts is one element in the totality of the forces of the world, and hence success is not certain. In the case of the successful effort, there is every possibility of the egoistic elation. Hence the insistence upon the selfless ( निरहकार ) and disinterested ( निराशीः ) action, which is the very crux of stable morality.

It is very well known that the Gita variously emphasises the paths of Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and the Patanjala Rajayoga. The importance of each one of these is such that there cannot be perfection in life if any one of these elements, is excluded. That may be regarded as the ideal Yoga which integrates all the factors instead of putting an exclusive importance on any one of these. As a matter of fact, the Gita teaching is based on the psychological truth that though the factors of cognition, affection and conation shed off into one another, like the corresponding *gunas* of *sattva*, *tamas* and *rajas*, yet in different persons some one of these elements is dominant. Where the cognitive or the *sattvika* element predominates the Jnanayoga is most appealing and easy of realisation. Where the affective or *tamasa* element predominates, the Bhaktiyoga finds its appeal. And where the conative or the *rajasa* element has the upper hand, the Karmayoga has its natural place. It must be remembered that the popular notion that the two *gunas* of *rajas* and *tamas* are intrinsically evil is not correct.



All these qualities directed on the right end of self-realisation are good, but shorn of this content of the right end, even *sattva* is bad. The supreme goal consists in transcending the exclusive influence of these qualities (*nastraigunya gunatita*) and harmonising them in a spiritual life. Moral effort begins in nullifying the evil effects of these, and ends in yoking them positively to the realisation of the highest end. When the evil sting in their sail is removed they are very useful for a wholesomely integrated life. If these qualities are not harnessed to a spiritual goal, they have a natural tendency to harness the individual into a perpetual bondage.

It will be observed by a close student of the Gita that the various paths which have been taught in it have not been taught as if they were exclusive of one another. Thus when Karmayoga is taught, it also makes a reference to Jnana and Bhakti as integral elements of the path of Karma. And the same mode of teaching is followed when the other Yogas are taught. Thus no one can be a true devotee who neglects action and knowledge. Nor can anybody be a Jnanayogi, who is averse to action and contains no grain of devotion. Rajayoga is a common basic discipline which may hasten systematically the achievement of the common spiritual goal. One may or may not be avowedly a follower of Rajayoga, but unless the qualities that make up for this kind of Yoga are imbibed no one can hope to succeed in his favourite Yoga.

But more important and significant than the mutual complementary character of these Yogas are the moral virtues which each of these Yogas again and again emphasises. The one thing which has constantly struck me is the description of virtues which is common to all the various Yogas. Whatever may be the distinctive differences of the Yogas be, none of them can afford to neglect the moral virtues. Even apart from the description of the Yogas, the Gita takes every opportunity of referring to the necessity of imbibing moral virtues.

Compare for instance, the description of the ideal person as *Sthitaprajna*, as *Gunatita*, as *Rajayogi*, *Karmayogi*, *Bhaktiyogi* and *Jnanayogi* at various places in the Gita. The same kind of moral virtues are repeated at various places as follows :— perfect equanimity of mind, complete surrender to God, desirelessness, cheerfulness, righteousness, fearlessness, selflessness, truthfulness,

faith, altruism, dispassion, detachment, non-enmity, friendliness, compassion, forgiveness, self-control, purity, serenity, contentment, resoluteness, absence of pride, straight-forwardness, non-violence, reverence, peacefulness, kindness, non-covetousness, sublimity, fortitude, sacrifice, giving, penance, renunciation, and so on. All these are important, nevertheless the oft-stressed among them are steadfast devotion to God and mental equipoise. But for them no moral virtue could be attained in its sublime form.

What is the place of these virtues in the teachings of the Gita ? To me they appear to be its very central teaching. They are the formative principle in each of the Yogas. No Yoga is ever possible without the practice and excellence of these virtues. If there is any single synthesising principle among the various Yogas it is the principle of moral perfection. Moral excellence is the be-all and end-all of every Yoga. It is both the means and the end of its realisation. It is at once the path and the destination, the method and the attainment, the process and the culmination. In all the teachings of the Gita the most pervading teaching is that of moral excellence. The Gita holds to it most steadfastly as the characteristic essence of every kind of Yoga. It is the catalytic agent, the integrating factor among the various Yogas. All those who have concentrated their attention on the one or the other Yoga have missed this central point. It is my conviction, as Sanjaya declares that wheresoever Shri Krishna, the Lord of Yogas, and Arjuna the wielder of the bow, go hand in hand, there is the unity of Divinity and Humanity, spiritual and material power, celestial grace and terrestrial effort—naturally are found prosperity, victory, glory and steadfast morality.

To sum up, the principal teaching of the Gita is steadfastness of moral excellence because that is its main theme. Again, morals are firmly founded on Absolutistic Metaphysics and are oriented to the ultimate goal of Divine life of man on earth. Further, every Yoga centres round the cultivation of moral virtues, so that moral excellence becomes the very criterion of any Yoga. The successful realisation of any yoga can be measured in terms of the moral excellence reached. Hence I repeat ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ।

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि सयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।  
इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ ३-६ ॥

To my mind, this Shloka points to the root of the obstacle which prevents man from attaining self-perfection

Manifest recognizable evils one knows how to deal with. The enemy stands before us in his true colours, determined to prevent us from treading the upward path, even though it be like a razor's edge. But one who hides his wickedness under a pleasant garb is unrecognizable as an enemy.

Many of us know how to avoid big vices. As Bernard Shaw very well puts it "Really good men are as rare as really bad men." In other words most of us are a mixture of good and bad. Few of us will be outright liars or murderers. But it is the small vices, which are imperceptibly accumulating day by day, that get us down in the end. The Gita rightly warns us that path of total renunciation cannot be trodden by all and sundry. If all of us were to pose as Samnyasins, most of us—would be hypocrites, hiding our lusts in a cloak of outward renunciation. The merit of the Gita is that it avoids latitudinous generalities as far as ethics is concerned and brings psychology back in the picture. The classification of types of people show that the conative urge is strong in most of us and as the previous Shlokas ( 4, 5 in Adhyaya III ) say one does not attain an attitude of detachment by simply not beginning any action and renunciation is difficult to attain.

So he who sits brooding on objects of sense while outwardly checking our organs of sense is a hypocrite indeed.

Can a Freudian, I would like to ask, put it better? Of course the Gita lacks the scientific approach of the modern scientist, but if the word ' scientific ' is used in the broad sense of ' objective ' then Gita's recommendation of renunciation of fruits of action is scientific in the proper sense of the word. I have increasingly felt that we should have our own text books on psychology and social and political Philosophy instead of blindly accepting Western text-books. Such Shlokas like the one I have selected should be picked out and elaborated chapter-wise in new text-books by Indian writers. I humbly submit this suggestion to learned Indian Professors of Philosophy.

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यो मा पश्यति सर्वत्र, सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।  
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि, स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ६-३० ॥

The Bhagawadgita is a treasure-chest so replete with gems of the purest ray serene that it is difficult to pick out any one that most appeals to the admirer of the work. Besides, by doing so, one incurs the danger of doing injustice to other verse in the Gita. Being innocent of Sanskrit, I am not in a position to appreciate the charm of language in the Gita, but there are some great verses that have haunted my mind from time to time by their deep and perennial significance. However, none has appealed to me more than this 30th verse of the 6th Chapter, which in my opinion is the quintessence not only of the Gita and of Hinduism but of universal religion. Its translation runs as follows .

“ He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me, of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me ”

It implies an unflinching belief in monism, that only one Reality exists, that Reality manifests itself in a multiplicity of forms, but that anything beside and beyond that Reality is inconceivable and is the result of ignorance and illusion. This is the principle of Advaita or non-duality of the Lord's presence pervading everything everywhere, though realised only by the enlightened soul. This is set forth in the Gita VI-29 .

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मान सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तामा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ ६-२९ ॥

“ The self, harmonized by Yoga seeth the SELF abiding in all beings, all beings in the SELF; everywhere he seeth the same. ” The Lord again says in X-20 :

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्य च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ १०-२०

“ I, O Gudakesha, am the SELF seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.” This runs parallel to Revelation The last Book of the New Testament XII-13 wherein the Lord asserts “ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. ” This clarifies a knotty problem of zoology that God is the origin of our being and the goal of our attainments, that God, as Tennyson says :—

“ That God, which—ever lives and loves,  
One God one law, one element,  
And one far off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves ”

God is not merely the beginning and end of life, He is life itself, transcending and yet immanent in life Hinduism is based on pantheism, the theory that all is God as expressed in the famous saying :— “ Sarvam Khalavidam Brahma ” ( verily, all this is God ) The Sufistic philosophy of Iran is also founded on the same principle. “ Hamch oost ” ( everything is He ). The theory that everything proceeds from God is a conventional one . pantheism goes further and identifies everything with God and *vice versa*.

The greatest charm of Sufistic literature is the glorification in rapturous verse of the yearning of the finite for the Infinite, as embodied in the ardent passion of the lover for the Divine Beloved The same is true ( under different symbolism or without any symbolic imagery at all ) of all forms of mysticism, Eastern and Western, realizing the oneness of the lower self with the higher SELF, and aspiring to establish immediate communion with the Infinite, without the help of intellect or philosophy and regardless of caste or creed, religion or dogma The body is but the means devised for the functioning of the soul, and the mystic who lives not in the

body but in the soul, leads a truly divine life and belongs not to the realm of the earth but to the Kingdom of God. He can well realize the truth of the statement of Christ—‘ the kingdom of God is within you ’ He has arrived at the stage of “ Aham Brahmasmi ” ( I am Brahma ) or “ Anal Haq ” ( I am God, uttered in divine ecstasy by Mansur Hallaj, the doyen of Iranian mystics ).

God is manifest in nature which is an unveiled but open Bible for all to seek inspiration from ever since the world was conceived as created and God Himself blows in the wind, flows with the tide, sheds beauty, colour and fragrance in the flowers, appears sublime and awe-inspiring in mountains and oceans, and manifests Himself in all His grimness in thunder and lightning, volcanoes and earthquakes. He is there in animal and bird life and in the lives of insects and reptiles, germs and bacteria. God is the soul manifesting itself through the body of Nature. The poet Pope crystallised the message of pantheism in a well known couplet —

“ All are but parts of our stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is and God the soul ”

Tennyson in his poem “ The Higher Pantheism ” was alive to this truth when he said —

“ The Sun, the Moon, the stars, the seas, the hills  
and the plains,  
Are not these, O soul, the vision of Him, who reigns ? ”

Wordsworth was himself a Nature mystic and was thrilled by the Divine Presence wherever he turned his gaze, outwards or inwards as he sings in the famous passage in “ Tintern Abbey ” :

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting Suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things ”

Centuries ago the Gita conveyed the same idea in two memorable verses ( XIII 13 15 ) :

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३-१३॥

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचर चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थ चान्तिके च तत् ॥ १३-१५ ॥

“ Everywhere THAT hath hands and feet, everywhere eyes, heads and mouths. all having; HE dwelleth in the world, enveloping all.—Without and within all beings immovable and also movable; by reason of His subtlety imperceptible; at hand and far away is THAT ”. Emerson, a good student of the Gita, stretched the principle of pantheism to its logical extreme when God is made to say in his well known poem “ Brahma ” :—

“ They reckon ill who leave me out;  
When me they fly, I am the wings;  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings ”

God in this universe is thus an inescapable reality, present equally in the atheist and his doubt and in the wagging of his blasphemous tongue as He is in the devotee, his dedicated heart and fervent prayer.

God has not created the universe as He is ordinarily understood to have done; Had He done so, it would have been a historical, or rather a prehistorical, event that had occurred in a certain age. It is needless to establish such a date, for the universe is not a creation but an emanation of the Eternal Being, as rays emanate from the Sun; and that which has emanated must be reabsorbed in its origin sooner or later. We are in God whether in a latent or patent condition. Salvation lies not in the knowledge but in the conviction that we are one with the Lord, and this realization is achieved through devotion and trance or through an ideally pure and godly life or love, which extends to all creatures of God and thus to God Himself, who is the sum total of all.

Some mystics are so convinced of their identity with the Lord that they are failures in the worldly sense. It is reported about Plotinus, the Neoplatonic mystic, that he was ashamed of his name, for though he was the Infinite, he was still called Plotinus. For similar reasons he would not look into the mirror and was



reluctant to stir out of his house, lest he might be reminded of his finiteness, when he had already realised the Infinite.

But if God is in all, it follows that He must be everywhere and in everything, in ferocious animals and venomous reptiles and in human beings worse than tigers and snakes. It is true we find it difficult to realise God in such creatures, but the fault is ours, because if we had been truly enlightened spiritually, we could have seen Him in the worst as it is easy to find Him in the noblest of His creation. Not till we are on the highest rung of the spiritual ladder can we be conscious of this truth. Till then we must continue to destroy these noxious creatures or be content to be destroyed by them. As we are told in the Gita XIII-27:—

सम सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्त परमेश्वरम् ।

विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्त यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ १३-२७ ॥

“Seated equally in all beings, the Supreme Lord, unperishing within the perishing he who thus seeth, he seeth” Thus it requires the highest spiritual vision to realize a truth which is apparently so diametrically opposed to common sense.

We may now briefly refer to certain arguments generally advanced against pantheism. It has been contended that the theory of God's presence in every atom would lead to blind fatalism, and reduce man to a hopeless puppet, who has only to follow the arbitrary will of God. It may be observed in reply that God is Absolute Goodness and Absolute Wisdom, and as such He cannot behave like an arbitrary and capricious dictator, but like a kind father. Again, man is free within certain limits to exert himself in the course of goodness, and then finally submit himself to the will of the Almighty. Thus Fate and God are not opposed, rather Fate is the will of God. For instance, the student's duty is clear, he is to work hard for the examination, but for the result he must identify his will with the will of the Supreme Being. The ideal student begins as an aspirant, but ends not as a rebel but as a Bhakta (devotee). God may be in us and in our actions, but if we ignore Him and lead an ungodly life, it is improper to reprehend Him for the result. Again, fate is largely the result of our own deeds in a past life, and we have to blame ourselves if the result is not up to our expectations.

It has also been argued that the doctrine of pantheism, according to which God pervades both good and evil, is fatal to our sense of morality, and deprives us of our personal freedom and responsibility. Our answer is that our soul, which is the spark of the Divinity within us, is not a determining and executive agent, but a disinterested spectator, who refuses to interfere in our personal freedom, our duties and responsibilities. Man himself is substantially the architect of his own fate, and must thank himself finally for the result, favourable or otherwise.

But, say the objectors, if God is Absolute Goodness pervading the universe, how can the existence of evil be accounted for ? Our answer is that all creatures do not stand on the same grade in the spiritual hierarchy. Their character varies according to their "Gunas" or qualities, whether "Sattvika" (pure), "Rajasika" (passionate) or "Tamasika" (dark or depraved). All are not on the same stage of spiritual evolution. Those who are not fully evolved are evil to some extent others may be still more evil and so on. Evil was not introduced extraneously through the forbidden Fruit or Pandora's box. The existence of evil is as natural in God as the comprehension of the part in the whole and we do not need an independent Satan or embodiment of evil to defy the Almighty and desecrate His work. Evil was and is always there in the world and will remain till we all are fully evolved and enlightened. Till then evil-doers must expect punishment only because they are not sufficiently advanced on the path of virtue. Even then it is the duty of the saint to forgive as of the philosopher to explain and of the judge to punish evil nay, even the same man in these three different capacities may have to function differently with apparent inconsistency. That is why it is so difficult to explain the origin of evil and still more difficult to justify our punishment of evil-doers, when the scriptures insist on kindness and forgiveness. But the Lord is as infinitely kind as He is wise, and promises peace and happiness to the evil-doer if he only repents and mends his ways. This is clear from the Gita IX-30,31 :—

अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यसितो हि स ॥ ९-३०

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ९-३१

“ Even if the most sinful worship me, with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous, for he hath rightly resolved. Speedily he becometh dutiful and goeth to eternal peace . O Kaunteya, know those for certain that My devotee perisheth never. ”

Another shaft from the quiver of the objectors is aimed at the idea that there can be no “ personal God ” in pantheism. This would leave the devotee without a definite object of adoration, and as a consequence his prayers would be frigid and spiritless, and not the longing outburst of a son for the father or a lover for the beloved. We may say in this connection that in sober fact there is nothing like a personal God, for God is essentially always above all forms and attributes. “ Personal God ” is man’s own invention, though a necessary one, for his own convenience, because he has often found it difficult to concentrate on a mere idea, devoid of forms and attributes. If, therefore, a personal God is a necessity to man, there is nothing to prevent a pantheist from conceiving a personal God, for God can be both transcendental and immanent, personal and impersonal, as the devotee fancies Him to be. Nothing for instance, can prevent a posthumous son from forming a conception of his father from some photo of his in the house and from the observations he hears about his father from the elders of the family. The Gita with its usual catholicity of outlook permits the Bhakta to approach God from any path he likes. In IV-11 the Gita says .— ये यथा मा प्रपद्यन्ते तास्तथैव भजाम्यहम् । मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्यः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ४-११ ॥ “ However men approach Me even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha. ”

In conclusion, we may say that if mysticism is the cream of religion, the core of mysticism is pantheism. God is ever pervading every thing, but the most evolved member of creation through which he manifests Himself is man from whom can be truly expected the Life Divine. It is naturally from man that we expect the fulfilment of the Gita VI-30 “ to see Me everywhere and seek everything in Me ” यो मा पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ॥ ६-३० ॥ Man can then cherish the unshrinking faith and reap the merited reward that in that case “ of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me ”

या निशा सर्वभूताना तरया जागर्ति सयमी ।  
यस्या जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ २-६९ ॥

They were the days when the Gita had taken complete possession of me. I was sincerely feeling that my life should be moulded according to the ideal of the Bhagawadgita I was studying in the B A. Class and trying to read every book on the Gita coming to my hand and hoping thereby to understand the real deep significance of the powerful words of the Gita For me, it was not only the text-book for the examination but the text-book for life I still remember the night which I spent in the company of different interpreters of the Gita trying to arrive at the real significance of Bhagawadgita II-69. It is the key verse in the description of a Sthitaprajna and Sthitaprajna is the ideal man of the Gita. I was awake for the whole night reading the different interpretations and trying to understand and evaluate them I had specially to select between the two interpretations—One by Shri Shankaracharya and the other by Lokamanya Tilak I was not convinced by Tilak's arguments and felt that he was misrepresenting the great Acharya At the same time, I was wondering why the author of the Gita should speak in such great metaphorical language. Ultimately however, I realised that it was the only way of expressing the transcendental truth and that every person had full right to interpret it in his own way. The Gita supports all of them and more.

This verse states that the self-restrained Sthitaprajna who

sees the truth remains awake when it is night for all beings and where the beings remain awake that happens to be the night for him. It is evident that the literal meaning is not intended by the author. Remaining awake in the night and sleeping in the daytime has nothing to do with realisation. However, by using this metaphor, the author of the Gita has tried to give compactly his idea of an ideal man. It is pregnant with meaning. The beings are asleep as regards the real goal of life. Nobody cares to realise the *self*, to find out the Reality that manifests in the world of appearance. They are not worried about eternal life, but go on quarreling for the petty things in the temporal world. Their interests are centred in the little self of their own imagination. They are carried away by the desire which never stops. When one object is achieved, the desire leads towards another. The great Acharya has put it in his masterly words :—

बालस्तावत्क्रीडास्तरुणस्तावत्तरुणीरक्तः ।

वृद्धस्तावच्चिन्तामग्नः परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न लग्नः ॥

“ While a child he is attached to sports, as a youth he runs after young ladies, in old age he is merged in worries and at no time is he after the Supreme Reality ” Alas ! Is this not a usual sojourn of temporal life for most of us ? What a wonderful summary of our biographies !!! In this regard, we are no better than animals. But a self-restrained seer is bound to be an exception to this rule. He knows that the desire is insatiable, that there can be no real pleasure in the sense-objects. As such, with a sportive outlook towards the incidents in the material world, he keeps himself firmly fixed and always awake in the bliss of the SELF within. He then finds that the same bliss has pervaded the whole world. Naturally, therefore, petty worldly things can never disturb his tranquil bliss. There will be no increase in his pleasure because he has gained some worldly object, nor will his bliss be lessened because he has incurred some loss from the worldly standpoint. In the petty selfish interests in which the people are so awake, he will be completely asleep. It will be as good as a night for him.

Read in its proper context, I do feel that the scope of the metaphor should be taken as wide as that. Further, I have no doubt that Shankaracharya is fully justified in finding support to his ideal of Samnyasa in this verse. The previous verse speaks

of the sense-control and the words Samnyasin, Pashyat, and Muni occurring in this verse indicate the same ideal. Here, I do not wish to enter into the controversy as to how Sthitaprajna is a Samnyasin, as it will require a longer dissertation on the ideal of Samnyasa. At the same time, I am reminded here of a story in the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad which tells how the same syllable 'Da' uttered by Prajapati was understood differently by Devas, Manusyas and Asuras and how Prajapati declared all of them to be correct. Devas who were indulging too much in sense-enjoyments thought that they were advised to control the senses (Damyata) Manusyas who were too much selfish considered that they were instructed to do charity (Datta) and the Asuras who were too much cruel understood that they were directed to show mercy (Dayadhvam). All of them were correct in their own way. Similarly, according to one's own type of personality and progress on the path of self-realisation, one is free to find one's own ideal in this verse and the Gita is practical enough to recognise different paths and stages.

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ये यथा मा प्रपद्यन्ते तास्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।  
मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ IV-11 ॥

This is the verse from the 4th chapter of the Gita. The meaning is, 'O Arjuna, in whatever manner men approach me so do I accept them in that manner, for all men follow my path from all sides'. This is one of the important verses of the Gita to show the true path of realisation. The Gita contains in itself many teachings no doubt but at the same time Bhagawan Sri-Krishna takes into account all the core of human mind, that is why he never commits himself to propound one path or the other. His attempt is to synthesize the main teachings of the ancient seers.

With this view in our mind it can be easily seen that the Bhagawadgita like all other philosophical works aims at attainment of Moksha or salvation. But there are various ways and means to achieve this goal such as Bhakti, Jnana, Karma, Yoga, which may again differ from one sect to another. All paths of salvation will lead to Him or to the Highest Reality.

In this verse the word 'my path' means the way of worshipping me as opined by Dr Radhakrishnan. Sridhara understands this word as 'मम भजनमार्गम्'. In addition, it requires faith which is the divine light to lead us to the path of reality. When anything is offered to Him with sincere devotion, it reaches him. In that case we will have to admit that the Gita is not narrow in outlook but quite liberal. It does not speak of this form or that

aspect of religion but emphasises the very devotional offering in all religions as a pursuit of Truth. Dr Radhakrishnan says "The same god is worshipped by all The difference of conception and approach are determined by local colouring and social adaptatons. All manifestation belong to the same Supreme" Udayanacarya writes " Whom the Saivas worship as Siva, the Vedantins as Brahman, the Buddhists as Buddha, the Naiyayikas who specialise in canons of knowledge as the chief agent.; the followers of Jama code as the ever free, the ritualists as the principle of law, may that Hari, the lord of the three worlds, grant our prayers". The spiritually immature are unwilling to recognise other gods than their own. This is the result of egotism in the domain of religious ideas The Gita, on the other hand affirms that though beliefs and practices may be many and varied, spiritual realisation to which they are the means, is one A strong consciousness of one's own possession of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth added to a condescending anxiety for the condition of those who are in outer darkness produces a state of mind which is not remote from that of an inquisitor How true it is ?

The God is not like a shop-keeper who barter everything. भक्त्या तुष्यन्ति दैवतानि —Deities are pleased with devotion In नारदस्मृति Sri Krishna says ' -सद्भक्ता यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ।— I always stand by that side where my devotees pray in a song". Moreover the vilest sinner be regarded as a saint if he serves the God with exclusive devotion as said in the Gita ( IX 30 ) In addition to this Sri Krishna says that devotees of even the lowest castes are saved by following the path of devotion ( IX 32 )

Thus we find that the God can be attained by true and sincere devotion Otto tells us as pointed by Sri Gurudeo Ranade in his book on Gita that Bhakti means faithful and loving devotion to one's god ( p 160 ) Aurobindo also emphasises that our highest ideal should be to surrender ourselves to the Master of Existence, which according to him constitutes the great finale of human achievements With regard to virtues Gurudeo Ranade says that God-devotion is the central thread of virtues ( p 212). Such a person does possess compassion, purity, self-control, equanimity, fearlessness, valour, service, sacrifice and spirit of altruism.



The way to approach and attain to God is nine-fold. ( श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् । अर्चनं वदनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥ ) As pointed out earlier a devotee may follow any one of these paths, he is assured of his upliftment by Sri Krishna. Importance is attached to internal side of man, not to the external one. Since Man is the epitome of the Universal self, he can reach it. In the verse ये यथा मा प्रपद्यन्ते तास्तथैव etc I think that Navavidha-bhakti and any other type of devotion, ancient as well as modern, are referred to. It does not speak of any class, caste, religion or sect and hence its outlook is universal, it is not limited but it crosses all limits of time and land. It does touch upon one chief core of devotion to Lord without which human life is incomplete and imperfect. If we want to have the teaching of the Gita, in a nut-shell, it can be put only in one verse "ये यथा मा प्रपद्यन्ते" Devotion to Lord is the very spirit of Reality, devotion to Lord is the very attainment of him. That is why I am fascinated and charmed much by this single verse in the Gita. It speaks of the main stream of Indian philosophy followed by many saints from Yajnavalkya, Aruni, Shankara, Jnanesvara, Tukarama to modern saints like Aurobindo, Gurudeo Ranade and others. Let us also follow them to tread on the path of Realisation.

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यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।  
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ १८-४६ ॥

“He from whom is the emanation of beings by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him in his own duty a man winneth perfection ”

This simple verse expounded four great facts . ( i ) God is. ( 2 ) He is the source of all beings ( 3 ) He pervades all; He is in all ( 4 ) By worshipping Him in his own duty a man winneth perfection—returns to Him—realises Him in himself.

### **God is and one who seeks Him finds Him**

There seem to be two ways of seeking Him ( 1 ) Neither accept Him nor reject Him and with open mind go out in search of Him. (2) Have sincere faith that He is and for personal conviction, go out in outer and inner journey in search of Him अस्ति इति एव उपलब्धव्यः ।

The first is the way of a man of science, the second is the way of a man of religion. Some scientists have found Him through their intellect and impersonal service and some men of religion have found Him through their intelligence, higher emotions and unselfish service, or thorough study and meditation

People of many creeds have given Him many forms and many names But He has remained formless and nameless. He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Any one can find Him as such, who seeks Him unselfishly in right direction.

Let us see Him, seek Him and serve Him in all and we shall find Him within our hearts.

He is the imperishable source of all beings.

Supreme life is self-born (स्वयम्भू) and from such life everyone and everything have come forth and will all return to it. There is no other way to go नान्य पन्था विद्यते अयनाय । He Pervades all

There is no point where He is not and there is nothing in which He is not working. He dwelleth in the hearts of all beings. He is in all and He is all. The whole universe is His body. This idea is beautifully expressed in the Bhagavata Purana as under —

ख वायुमग्नि सलिल मही च ज्योतिषि सत्त्वानि दिशो द्रुमादीन् ।  
सरित्समुद्राश्च हरे शरीर यत्किञ्च मूर्त प्रणमेदनन्य ॥

“Space (ether), wind, fire, water, and earth, the sun, the moon and stars and elements, directions and trees (vegetable kingdom) etc, rivers and oceans are the body of the Lord. Therefore whoever have forms be respected and be saluted with the least sense of separation.” As we pervade our bodies so God pervades His body which is the whole universe. As we are known through our bodies, so He too is known, can be known through His body. By worshipping Him in his own duty in his daily life a man winneth perfection.

This part of the verse clearly shows what ideal worship is. To develop strong and healthy body, pure and loving heart and clear and intelligent mind and to use them and one's whole being in being good and doing good to all that lives is true, humble and joyous duty of every intelligent man and woman. यद्यकर्म करोमि तत्तदखिल शम्भो तवाराधनम् ।

O God whatever action I do, I offer it as my humble worship to thee. God offers all and needs nothing. To offer clothes, ornaments, sweets, fruits and flowers to God is mostly outer show and mostly with desire for safety, power, position, prestige and property, unbecoming of a religious mind, religious heart and religious personality.

Any one of any race, of any country, of any creed, of any sex, of any caste and of any colour who worships God in the

whole universe in the way prescribed in the verse given at the top is sure to win perfection.

Perfection is Liberation from all imperfections God is perfect. God is in all So the seed of perfection is in all God has a plan of leading every fraction or Jiva to perfection and the plan is evolution. Under this universal Law all forms are being upbuilt, unbuilt and rebuilt, matter is evolved and the consciousness is expanded till it embraces the Universal Consciousness The question why there are imperfections and limitations will be answered or solved when we reach perfection. Till then the fact is that we are imperfect. And the verse under consideration shows a very practical way to perfection

*The First step* : To worship God in doing one's own duty, one has to begin with self-knowing Self-knowing is the beginning of wisdom One can know oneself in relationship to each member of the family, to friends, to foes, to neighbours, to servants, to co-workers, to students if one is a teacher, to workmen if one is a factory owner, to clients if one is a lawyer, to customers if one is a merchant, to one's superiors, to one's inferiors, to one's countrymen, to foreigner, to one's surroundings, to animals, to trees and to Nature itself. Living this way with introspection one will find out one's weaknesses and strength, one's shortcomings and one's excesses and will be able to see truth as truth and falsehood as falsehood and to transform oneself. Then understanding the purpose of life, he or she will be able to worship God, Allah, Ahura Mazda, Ishvara, the Supreme Self in his or her own duty and to follow the path which leads to Perfection.

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समा ।

एव त्वयि नान्यथेतोस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥ २ ॥ ईशावास्योपनिषत्

While performing one's duty one may aspire to live for a country. If you live in this way none of your actions will create obstruction in your path of progress.

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इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यात गुह्याद्गुह्यतर मया ।  
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि नथा कुरु ॥ १८-६३ ॥

Lokamanya Tilak opens his commentary on the Bhagawadgita with an abiding valued judgement that the Bhagawadgita is one of the most luminous and spotless diamonds among the Hindu scriptures<sup>1</sup> I would add that it is not only a diamond, but it is a mine of diamonds radiating 'a light that was never on land or sea' as Wordsworth would say. The poet said about the Shakuntalam that the drama is the most pleasing species of poetry and Shakuntalam is the loveliest among the dramas. Its fourth Act excels and from amongst it the quartette of verses shines forth resplendent. This variety of figure of speech is known as the climax or the Sara. The task set to me to pick and choose only one verse from the Bhagawadgita which influences me the most, to say the least, is formidable. It is by no means easy to spot the most luminous star from a galaxy.

However I would at once say that the verse from the eighteenth Chapter quoted above influences me the most. It can be translated thus —

"Thus has wisdom more secret than all secrets,  
been declared to thee by Me, Reflect on it fully  
and do as thou chooseth"

In the first place this verse occurs in the climactic Chapters

1 Gita-rahasya, p 1.

of the Bhagawadgita and it signifies the culmination of the teaching of this Bible of wisdom.

Which is this top secret wisdom taught by the Bhagawadgita ? Shri Aurobindo observes ' All we need of spiritual truth for the spiritual life is to be found in the Gita ' <sup>2</sup> In other words this great seer thinks that the Bhagawadgita expounds spiritual wisdom. According to Gurudeo R. D. Ranade God-realisation constitutes the Apurvata, the novelty or the supreme contribution of the Bhagawadgita. He adds ' that it is one of the greatest works on mysticism that the world has ever seen ' <sup>3</sup>, while Justice Divatia believes that the great Gospel teaches the art of life. <sup>4</sup> Thus the Gita concerns itself with the art of life here and hereafter.

Now to lead to the mystic goal of relation of spiritual truth and the realisation of the God there are the traditional fourfold paths viz. of knowledge, action, devotion and renunciation. It is true that a substantial body of enlightened opinion is to the effect that the Bhagawadgita is an attempt to reconcile these contending courses. However Shankaracharya reads a message of renunciation in the Bhagawadgita Dr. Bhandarkar believes that devotion is the core of the Lord's teachings. According to the Jnaneshwar the Gita is a gospel of mysticism leading towards God-realisation Edgerton also thinks that the teaching of the Gita is mystical like the teaching of Christ. Mahatma Gandhiji says that the Gita expounds the doctrine of Anasakti ( disinterestedness ) and Ahimsa ( Non-violence ) is an aspect of Anasakti. Lokamanya Tilak champions the great doctrine of activism as being the essence of the song celestial Dr Basham of the London University also agrees with Tilak Swami Chinmayanand emphasises that Krishna's bugle call is to wake up man from this delusory misconception of happiness Real and absolute bliss lies beyond the wheel of this change, the Samsara <sup>5</sup>

It will be seen that the Bhagawadgita has expounded the fourfold path of salvation of the human spirit. This exposition saddled with a labyrinth of interpretations as set out above. At the end of his prolonged discourse the Lord is also aware that he

2 *Essays on the Gita*, Second Series, p 398.

3 *Bhagawadgita as a philosophy of God realization*, p 138.

4 *The art of life in the Bhagawadgita*, p 152.

5 *Some Thoughts To Think*, p 10

has brought Arjuna to cross-roads and hence in this Verse he candidly tells his disciple ' Reflect on it fully and do as thou choosest '

The divine God leaves the ultimate decision to his human disciple. Dr Radhakrishnan observes,

' God is seemingly indifferent, for He leaves the decision to Arjuna's choice His apparent indifference is due to His anxiety that each one of us should get to Him of his own free choice He constrains no one since free spontaneity is valuable. Man is to be wooed and not coerced into co-operation He is to be drawn, not driven, persuaded, not compelled The Supreme does not impose His command We are free at any moment to reject or accept the Divine call. The integral surrender should be made with the fullest consent of the seeker God does not do the climbing for us, though He is ever ready to help us when we stumble, comfort us when we fall God is prepared to wait in patience till we turn to Him' <sup>6</sup>

The Bhagawadgita starts with a struggle on the physical plane and expounds the struggle on the spiritual plane Man is the problem child of God Animals have no problems Man is essentially a rational being, conscience being the differentia demarcating him from the rest of the living creation of God Arjuna is like Hamlet of Shakespeare, a great gentleman and a man of keen conscience gifted with finer sensibility Neither Shakespeare's Othello nor Vyasa's Bhima is vexed with any such ethical problem as to what was the Dharma i.e. the right conduct for a warrior was Arjuna's problem is a problem of conscience. The *sine qua non* of human conscience is free will or freedom of thought Hence conscientious reaction is bound to vary from man to man This freedom of conscience is recognised even by the Smritikaras as 'Whatever is agreeable to one's own self' is recognised as one of the sources of Dharma, along with the Vedas and the Smritis <sup>7</sup> Thus here we come across a significant coalition between the Dharma-shastra and the Niti-shastra This emphasis on the principle of self-determination is also echoed by Kalidasa

<sup>6</sup> Bhagawadgita, pp 375-375

<sup>7</sup> स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः । मनु २, १२, याज्ञवल्क्य १, ७

when Dushyant observes, 'For to the righteous person, in case of doubt, inclination of the heart is the (deciding) authority<sup>8</sup>. Great poetry is often a reflection of ethical values.

One American scholar studying Indian thought, while lecturing in Delhi a few years ago, remarked that Indians are tradition-minded and they are shy to think apart from the beaten path, that there is no freedom of thought in the pristine Indian philosophy and the thought in India is stagnant and seldom progressive. I was present at that meeting and tried in my humble way, to combat this view by pointing out the present verse in the Bhagawadgita. I also called attention to the celebrated Convocation address from the Taittiriya Upanisad wherein the preceptor frankly concedes to his outgoing disciples 'Imitate only our good deeds, and disregard the rest'<sup>9</sup> The Gita is admittedly one of the Upanisads and it is no wonder that it also ends on the same note of freedom of thought and action as is underlined by its predecessor.

Freedom of thought and freedom of action must go hand in hand. One without the other is disastrous and the second without the first is infructuous. Action is first conceived in thought and a thoughtless action is a contradiction in terms. Even a hasty action is preceded by a hasty thought. So a revolutionary action is preceded by revolutionary thoughts. It is well known that Rousseau and Voltaire by their flamboyant writings fanned the embers of seething discontent of the Frenchmen into the flames of the French Revolution. 'Man is born free but every where he is in chains', thundered Rousseau. This thunder was followed by the lightning storming of the Bastille in Paris in 1789. But for the timely expression of appropriate thoughts by the French publicists the French Revolution could not have been focussed on achieving the goal of the modern trinity of liberty, fraternity and equality. Freedom of action without freedom of thought would be disastrous<sup>10</sup> because unplanned action is disastrous.

If freedom of action without freedom of thought is disas-

8 सता हि सन्देहपदेषु वस्तुषु प्रमाणमन्त करणप्रवृत्तयः । शाकुन्तलम् १, २२

9 यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि ॥ तानि त्वयोपास्यानि ॥ २ ॥

नो इतराणि ॥

10 अविवेकः परमापदा पदम् ।



trous, freedom of thought without freedom of action is infructuous. Mere right to think for oneself is meaningless without the consequent right of translating that thought into action. It is inconsistent with the bearings of a free Society. The plantation of democracy can blossom only in the climate of free thought and action. Voltaire said, "I disagree with you but I will defend with my life your right to say so" The Indian Constitution has guaranteed these fundamental freedoms to its citizens

Metaphysics attempts to probe into the infinite, while physics tries to peep into the finite. But for either kind of searching inquiry, freedom of thought and action is the indispensable pre-requisite 'No freedom no progress,' is the law of life. The ideal of enlightened humanity is to progress from well to better daily self-surpass. Freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent, observes Tennyson. This ideal either on the material, mental or spiritual plane cannot be realised without the freedom of choice of thought and action

Yogeshwara Krishna was fully conscious of this and hence at the end of his advice he exhorts Arjuna to think for himself and to come to the right conclusion about the right conduct. God (Narayana) has equipped man (Nara) with the tools and the know-how of it, but it is for man to make use of it in the light of his own conscience. To have the courage of the other man's convictions is never encouraged as a virtue by the Indian philosophy. Man must think for himself and act for himself. This is the supreme teaching of the Bhagawadgita. The most remarkable feature of this verse is that even God has refused to indoctrinate man.

God does not believe in brain washing. That is why Aldous Huxley remarks.

'The Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind. The Bhagawadgita is perhaps the most systematic spiritual statement of the Perennial Philosophy.'<sup>11</sup>

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11 *Introduction to the Bhagawadgita*, Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (1945)

मा हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनय ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परा गतिम् ॥ ९-३२ ॥

‘ Oh Partha, those who seek my shelter reach the highest abode, let them be most sinful persons, women, traders or serfs’.

This is one of the most important verses in Shrimat Bhagavadgita, since it tells clearly that all are equal and nobody is inferior by birth

The greatness truly depends upon, what a person achieves in his life. It is repeatedly told in Gita that, God occupies the heart, the most important and vital part of the body of a living being. He lives there in the form of soul to watch the actions and activities of that particular living being

It is believed that soul is a part of GOD. If a fruit is cut and divided into different parts, no part will differ from other parts in colour, taste, or scent but all these qualities are uniformly found in all the parts, as they were in the original fruit. Even if these parts of the fruit are kept in different types of dishes, they will remain unchanged as to their original qualities

According to Hindu religion, there are 84,00,000 “Yonis” through which this soul has to move after departing from one body to the other.

One is known by the company he keeps, so the soul even though does not do anything but simply watches the activities of the body he enters; as he has no choice and has to enter such body that suits the deeds of the body he had watched from the

birth till death of that being A man sitting under a 'toddy tree', holding a cup of milk in his hand is taken by others to be drinking 'Toddy' and not milk

Diversity is the rule of God's creation. No two individuals are similar and even if you find similarity, at least some difference is always noticeable so the 'Prakriti' or creation creates so many different forms colours, voices, limbs, etc so we see so many types of living beings Every living being has a heart. The heart is the seat of GOD; where there is a soul there is a life. If the soul leaves the body the very moment it becomes a corpse or a carcass, whatever we may call it

This is the reason why we should regard all living beings equal According to the Hindu religious customs when we meet any person or a cow, we fold our hands with respect, we fold our hands not to the outer form but to the inner soul, the part of GOD.

When human beings became wise to bring the stability to the society, religion was established with definite rules of behaviour There started the differences, superior better, good, bad, worse, worst, etc Those who could hold reign, thought themselves superior. The weaker sections of the society were oppressed for the benefit of the superiors.

It is the nature of the man to hold power. Once he is intoxicated by power he is always under its influence, and he comes out of that only in the event of his death Influence of wine or narcotics vanishes after some hours With the object of holding power the— 'Chaturvarnya' system came in vogue Brahmins were learned and they were the preceptors and so they were honoured in the society The second in rank were Kshatriyas This second sect was very powerful and trained in arms In addition to these two sects, there were two more sects, viz Vaishyas, i. e. traders and agriculturists and the other Shudras or the servants Women in all these sects were always considered to be weak and although it was not called the 5th sect, they were always under influence of men To maintain their superiority, the first two sects, debarred the other remaining two sects of the society and also the women from acquiring real knowledge of absolution since they desired that these two sects should always

be at their service. Nobody wanted that his servant should rise to his status.

But the GOD is altogether different from these powerful sects HE wishes that every living being, not only human beings, should rise by their own conduct to such a level that they should be one with HIM.

In this stanza GOD gives open assurance to all those who lead the life of pure devotion, they can become one with HIM. They may be born even in the wretched sinful sections of living beings. If such beings can become one with GOD, then what of women, traders and Shudras Nobody can Stand in their way of being one with GOD

In Gita several ways of reaching GOD are told As now-a-days if we want to go to a distant country, there are several modes of reaching the destination, like planes, motor-cars, railways, steamers, motor-cycles, bicycles and one's own feet. By the aid of these we can reach destination, only it will be a question of time and the sufferings on the way So here God has told the aspirants the way of full devotion to GOD, which is the easiest of all and within the reach of all to reach HIM We know from 'Puranas' that so many devotees like Narada, Ambarisā, Harishchandra, Pralhada, Radha, even birds like Jatayu and animals like Gajendra reach him with true devotion only. Further examples can be quoted from recent history—Princess like Mira, Saints like Tulsidas and Tukaram, sweeper Chokha, weaver Kabir, ordinary house-woman like Janabai became one with GOD only by their selfless devotion and not necessarily following 'Yoga' They did not perform any Yajna or they may not possess any outstanding merit or knowledge

From this verse of 'Shrimat Bhagawadgita' we can without any hesitation say that the present principles of equality of races which is much talked of by the Westerners is not new to us. It was told in the Gita some 5000 years back.

It is the speciality of the Hindu religion that it does not look with contempt at other religions of the world; while on the other hand we can say that Christians and Muslim Religions look with little contempt and vitiated vision at other religions Truly speaking any religion is established for the well being of the

Society. There should not, as a matter of fact, be a place for contempt towards other religions

Many people complain that Hindu Religion is not aggressive; and that is why people are lured by other religions. To be one with GOD is the noblest principle, and the same is the base of the Hindu Religion.

Lord Shri Krishna tells his disciple Arjuna in the last chapter that "Leave aside all religions and be my devotee and I will make you free from all sins. Do not entertain any doubt in your mind. If you will be my staunch devotee, you will be one with me".

So none should keep any inferiority complex in one's mind. Nobody should think that he has not acquired knowledge; and thus he has no means to reach GOD. The only thing one has to do is selfless devotion to reach GOD.

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अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मा ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९-२२ ॥

The Bhagawadgita is an ocean of nectar. Every drop of it is sweet, every verse of it is a source of exhilaration. It is therefore very difficult to choose any one of the verses for the present article. I have however selected the above verse.

The verse can be translated as follows :

‘To those who adore Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever dedicated to me, I bring security’

The verse implics ‘Yoga-Kshema’ as the goal in view of every one, and the means to achieve it are, absolute concentration on God, complete devotion and never-failing surrender to me i. e. God, all practised together

It is undeniable that Yoga-Kshema is the ultimate good *Summum bonum* aspired by every individual. Every human being is desirous of security in this life as well as in life after death. Yoga-Kshema in common parlance denotes worldly maintenance (Prapancha-nirvaha). But in a broader sense Yoga-Kshema is viewed from two aspects—one is the material and the other is the spiritual aspect. Viewed from the former it means livelihood, worldly maintenance, and from the spiritual point of view the compound word has to be split up into two words Yoga and Kshema, which according to Shankaracharya’s interpretation mean realization of the unrealized (Yoga) and

preservation of what is realized (Kshema). But if both these aspects are considered together, there is no objection to stating that Yoga-Kshema as a whole indicates successful living. There are two essentials for a successful life,—material welfare and spiritual bliss, Sanskrit terms corresponding to which are अभ्युदय and निःश्रेयस्. These are the two sides of the same coin. Yoga in a sense means union and Kshema means welfare. So Yoga-Kshema means welfare in union. From the material point of view this union denotes social union, social contact, fellow-feeling, goodwill, love, compassion and sympathy for others, right relationship to other people in the society, identifying ourselves with others. If the individual lives for himself and is actuated by selfish motives without respect for the welfare of his fellowbeings, if he enjoys his own pleasures at the expense of others, then God will not bring him security and welfare which spring from social contact and fellow feeling. A self-centred, insincere person cannot enjoy Yoga-Kshema, for, ultimately his transient material pleasures and selfish attitude are bound to carry him to an insecure path. So from the material side that kind of life only which is lived harmoniously, that is to say blessed with Yoga, gives security (Kshema) to the individual.

Now let us consider the spiritual side of Yoga-Kshema. For, without spiritual bliss, material welfare has no value. Without peace of mind, without absolute tranquility heaps of wealth and material pleasure are worthless. Let us turn to the example of a coin. On one side of the coin may appear description of the value of the coin, and on the other side there is an inscription of the insignia or symbol or distinguishing mark of the Government. Without such insignia, the coin can never be legal tender in the country even if its intrinsic or current value is written on the backside. So material prosperity howsoever great has no value unless it is associated with divine favour. It is in this respect that Shankaracharya's interpretation of Yoga-Kshema already alluded to, stands supreme. "Yoga", he says, "is the realization or the acquisition of the unrealized or the unacquired, and 'Kshema' is preservation of what is realised or acquired."

Now the question arises as regards the method or the means indicated in this verse for the attainment of such Yoga-Kshema. The verse clearly expresses three-fold means, namely absolute

unalloyed concentration on God, complete devotion and never-failing surrender to God. The object to be achieved with these means is the realization of God and preservation of this realization. I have taken the verse to mean in the above sense. Let us elucidate the three-fold means. Divine love and devotion are synonymous terms. Perfect devotion to God (पर्युपासना), intense yearning of the heart to realize Him are indispensable for the attainment of spiritual bliss in the form of Yoga-Kshema. But the pre-requisite for such devotion is the knowledge of the principle that God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, that, God is all pervading, that God is all and God is in all. For in the first place, a person cannot love any void and secondly, love for external objects viewed only for sensual pleasure derived from them and hence transient in nature, can never last, such love is sure to fade away, in course of time. Upasana signifies an effort to realize the proximity or presence of the Supreme Self. A devotee is one who performs Upasana i. e., he thinks of nothing but God (Ananya-chintana), wherever he goes and whomsoever he sees. For a true devotee is convinced that every thing, every being is the manifestation of God. He is convinced that God who is beyond the realm of senses, mind and intellect, God who is formless, has revealed himself in the form of the Universe. He clearly understands the principle that in every atom of the Universe, in everything, everywhere there is God and God alone and this consciousness of God, of the omnipresence of God, enables him gradually to realize and to enjoy union with the Divine, union of the Individual soul (Jivatma) with Absolute soul (Paramatma). A devotee meditates incessantly on God, meditation on God becomes to him habitual for he has full, firm faith in Him, in His grace; his mind is entirely fixed on him and even the least separation from Him becomes unbearable to such a sincere devotee. Such a devotee once he has become conscious of the presence of God, surrenders to Him absolutely and then he truly realizes that all is Brahman (सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म). He looks upon the whole universe as his home. He becomes the embodiment of love for all and so he becomes a true friend of humanity, and hence the true devotee of God. With his strong and intense longing to realize Him he knows that his life is one with the life of the Universe. He

surrenders up the ego by constant identification with Him through prayer and meditation. He makes his progress towards 'Yoga-Kshema' travelling on the path of knowledge of Divine presence and meditation, devotion and self surrender. Such a devotee once he has enjoyed the union with the Divine, once he is blessed with Yoga or realization of God, will at all times and in every place, in every breath of his existence remember the Loving God, while engaged in his day-do-day common activities and even in warfare. He will do his worldly duties freely but all the time his heart will be fixed on God, and wherever he may be and whatever he may do he will dwell eternally with God. He ever meditates upon His great attributes. He is overflowing with Divine love. He ever surrenders all his actions to Him. This meditation, devotion and surrender make his life in this world and even beyond this world, blessed and successful. He attains true mental peace. He attains real Siddhi. For what is Siddhi after all? सिद्धिर्मनःशान्तिः Mental peace is real Siddhi or achievement which leads to realization of God and preservation of this realization. God with His unbounded love and grace with His constant proximity looks after the Yoga Kshema of such devotee and ultimately brings about the union of the devotee with Him.

Thus we perceive in this verse the seeds of the Great Yogas ordained by God for the good of humanity. They are Jnana-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, and Karma-Yoga. Raja-Yoga should also be added to these for Raja-Yoga too steadies the mind and is helpful in the path of knowledge (Jnana-Yoga), Devotion (Bhakti-Yoga) and Action (Karma-Yoga). The real aim of all these paths is the communion with God, the absorption of the individual with the eternal Brahma. Absolute concentration or meditation as referred to above, presumes knowledge of Divine presence. First, the veil of ignorance through Jnana-Yoga must be removed, then only true meditation is possible and devotion to God can spring up in the heart of the devotee. Such a devotee always surrenders all his action to God. All these paths therefore lead to real happiness which consists in Yoga-Kshema, mentioned in this verse.

अधिष्ठान तथा कर्ता करण च पृथग्विधम् ।
विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा दैव चैवान् पञ्चमम् ॥ १८-१४ ॥

The body, the agent, the various organs, the diverse kinds of efforts and Providence also the fifth point (These are the necessary things for an action to be performed.)

The whole theme of the philosophy of the Bhagawadgita is towards कर्ममार्ग or कर्मयोग Lokamanya Tilak's Gita-rahasya also has mainly been written to impress this view point along with other philosophy in this sacred work. The Gita wants to show so far as this above-mentioned Shloka is concerned that for a person, whenever he does any action, five important things are there before he commences any of them. Or in other words, these five things are there before any action is performed, whether he (the doer) may be aware of their existence or not. Therefore no action can take place or happen unless these five agencies are there. First the body of the individual; then the Agent or Karta i. e. one who does any action, then comes करण or साधनम् i. e. the material with which he does any action or it may be called an instrument of action and various movements कर्म or dealings and the fifth is दैव.

अधिष्ठान ते शरीर । कर्ता तो आत्मा परिकर ।
करण चेष्टा इन्द्रियव्यापार । पाचवे अदृष्ट पै ॥

Any action, according to this Shloka, to reach the

highest goal or to attain accomplishment or to attain perfection (by action) requires these five causes Janaka Raja and others attained perfection by action and so it is stated in the Bhagawadgita So far as my personal view is concerned, I may say that the examples of Janaka Raja and others, that are quoted in the Gita are exceptions to the general rule and therefore, they prove the rule, they do not disprove it. Taking for granted that a certain man possesses strong healthy body and has got in him qualities that a best doer of action or कर्ता requires, he has got best instruments or Sadhanas to do any action desired by him, all his actions of various kinds or his various movements too are all well intended, well planned, well meant and well begun on honest footing, before he begins any well meant action, but I say if the fifth viz. अदृष्ट, दैव, or प्राक्तन be not with him, his action, notwithstanding all other factors, will not attain perfection because the दैव is not favourable to him and if so it will be seen that this दैव factor is equal to the rest four अधिष्ठान, कर्ता, करण or कारण and पृथक् इन्द्रियव्यापार Here it may also be said that this दैव means पूर्वकृतशुभाशुभसंस्कार । याचेच्च नाव दैव (The fruit of all good or bad actions of the past) Persons therefore, whose previous life's good actions or doings are not in their favour cannot attain perfection as their दैव or a balance of good deeds is not to their credit. Therefore it comes to this that only those who have got good stars or who are favoured by God will be successful and attain perfection by doing actions on the lines of this Shloka of the Bhagawadgita. I do not mean to say that fate alone should be given first place in this Shloka, but that I have to say that even when any individual has fulfilled the four conditions in this Shloka and done his duty well, he will not attain perfection, सिद्धि if the दैव factor is lacking.

There have been in this world many men who were not successful in their object They were honest, straight forward and God-fearing Only Janaka Raja's name has been mentioned, because such men are very few From this Shloka I am inclined to believe in fate and by personal experience also have been compelled or forced to believe in it, though I am not a fatalist Man must do his duty well and honestly and not rely on Fate (अदृष्ट) but should be prepared for the result and should welcome whatever it may be favourable or unfavourable But it is certain that unless

one's प्राक्तन, अदृष्ट or दैव is with one, one will not be powerful, perfect or popular in one's life. "Man proposes and God disposes" this proverb, I am sure, might have been prepared or composed by him who surely might have personally suffered from अदृष्ट or दैव not being on his side. Only those therefore whose दैव is favourable prosper or attain perfection (सिद्धि).

Perfection is reached by a man who is devoted to his own duty (स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरता.) One should not be particular about the result, one must do one's duty for duty's sake. Learn to labour and to wait दैवी सपद् विमोक्षाय. The divine properties are deemed to lead to मुक्ति or liberation. It is stated in another Shloka of Gita that these divine qualities cannot be acquired in one birth only. It is the accumulation of several previous births. These qualities cannot be acquired by any efforts in the present birth only. It is पूर्वोर्जित or the acquisition of past births. On account of this we see many great people having reached highest ranks or having attained immortal fame.

In whatever they undertook they attain perfection. These people had to their credit प्राक्तन or दैव which has been referred to as the fifth essential factor in the above Shloka.

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मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जित ।
निर्वैर सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ११-५५ ॥

The Bhagawadgita or more popularly called the Gita is an unique book or a compendium. It covers only seven hundred simple verses in easy Sanskrit language and covers the whole field of Indian philosophy in both its parts of theory and practice.

The Gita is a part of the great epic Mahabharata composed according to modern critical scholars some centuries before Christ. This wonderful book of the Gita has captivated the hearts of scholars and saints from the East and the West alike. For centuries past it has influenced the life careers of ancient great men like Shri Shankaracharya and modern great men like Lokamanya Tilak, Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinobaji Bhave.

The central teaching this wonderful book seeks to inculcate is that, there is only one entity which underlies this vast universe which is only a reflection in numberless forms and names of the same underlying entity. This one single entity is called "Brahma" or "Parabrahma" in Sanskrit. The nature of it is described as Sat, Chit and Ananda or everlasting, ever-living and ever-blissful. The Gita lays down that the Supreme goal of human life is to seek and achieve identity with this one single underlying entity called Parabrahma. The way to achieve this goal of life is fourfold according to the Gita. The way of action, the way of devotion, the way of knowledge and the way of Yoga or medita-

tion Seekers prefer the one or the other way of these four ways to achieve their ideal as per their special likings and aptitudes. As a matter of fact, however, these four ways of reaching the goal are not altogether independent and exclusive of each other, but all the four ways have to be resorted to a smaller or greater extent by the seekers on their way to reach their goal. In this respect I refer to the last verse viz. the 55th verse of the Eleventh Chapter of the Gita. The verse as translated in English runs as follows :—

“ Oh Pandava, one who engages oneself in all activities for realizing one and who holds myself to be the highest goal and who is my (earnest) devotee and who is devoid of any attachment (to fruit or pleasure of any kind) and bears hatred to none, such a one attains to me. ”

This verse enumerates in a nutshell the simultaneous resort to all the ways of realizing the Godhood.

I prefer this 55th verse of the Eleventh Chapter as it combines all the most important three methods of action, devotion and knowledge for realizing the highest goal viz. merger into the ultimate reality viz. Parabrahma.

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अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ ४-६ ॥

The Gita expounds the Nature of Divine Reincarnation in this verse "Gita is an inexhaustible ocean of ever fresh nectar Every time you dive in it, you experience an altogether new thrill, a new refreshing vigour and strength to face Life without illusion " Shri Swami Shivananda

The above quoted Shloka is in the fourth chapter of the Gita and it is the sixth sloka. According to Swami Shivananda, we find new vigour everytime we dive in the ocean of the Gita. So from this Shloka, we learn a good deal Lord Krishna at the beginning of this Chapter gives the glorious history of Karmayoga. The Lord first imparted this sacred knowledge to Vivasvat the Sun-God What must be the power of his lustre who imparted this light to the *God of Light* ? Vivasvan in his turn handed it over to Manu, the founder of the Solar Dynasty Manu gave it over to Ikshvaku, the King who was at the apex of the royal pedigree of the Solar dynasty From this principal sovereign of that Dynasty, it came down to many learned monarchs After many years, this sacred knowledge was forgotten It was because Arjuna the great was an ardent devotee and a friend with unchallengeable fidelity of Lord Krishna that this 'Sovereign Science' was taught to him by a preceptor of an extra-ordinary nature Having heard this long and bright tradition behind an important teaching of the Lord, it occurred to Arjuna as curious, while Krishna was of recent origin and the birth of Vivasvan dated back to remote antiquity, how the Lord could

be the preceptor of this illustrious person in the past. The difficulty with which Dhanurdhara Arjuna was faced seems to be quite natural from a chronological point of view. But it appears that Arjuna again was invaded by some illusion and forgot the essentially divine nature of the person sitting near him as a friend, philosopher and guide. The confident manner in which the Lord removes the doubt of his disciple and declares that He knows the past lives not only of himself but of Arjuna, shows the essentially omniscient and omnipresent characteristic of God. The Shloka quoted above immediately follows this revelation of God to Arjuna and hence it is of unique value. It gives in very significant terms the salient characteristics of the Supreme Being known in the Gita by various names such as Brahma, Paramatma etc.—and the theory of incarnation or Avatara. The theory occupies a very important place in Indian philosophy. Though saint Vyasa is credited with the composition of the Gita, he is reproducing the words of Lord Krishna. Hence, it is our great fortune that we are having this knowledge of the Lord from his own lips.

Now, let us turn to understand the actual and detailed significance of the Shloka quoted above. The verbal rendering of the Shloka runs thus —“ Though unborn and though I am essentially of an imperishable nature, and though I am the Lord of all the beings, I manifest myself, keeping my ‘ Prakriti ’ under control ‘through my own power’. ‘We must understand very clearly the hidden currents underlying this important Shloka’. Here, in the first instance, God calls Himself as ‘ Aja ’—unborn. Here we must make a clear distinction between the embodiment of any individual soul and the Divine incarnation. God is unborn in the sense that He is not born out of something else. He is self-existent. The embodiment of individual souls is dependent upon their previous Karma. Thus, the births and rebirths are not in the hands of individual souls, but God being independent of all these limitations of Karma is free to choose his embodiment, its nature and time. Secondly, the individual soul is in the hands of ‘ Prakriti ’ while God owns it as his nature. It is an instrument in the hands of God. So He says ‘ प्रकृति स्वामधिष्ठाय ’. Thus God alone, in this sense of taking births, is independent. Secondly, he is said to be ‘ Avyayatma ’. His soul, as late Lokamanya Tilak points out in his famous work ‘ The Gita-rahasya ’ does not undergo any

change It is immutable Of course, every individual soul is originally immutable as the Lord Himself describes it in the Shloka No 25 of Chap II where he says—

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेव विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥

But it is engulfed by illusion or Maya and hence cannot know the ' Para '. Further the Lord is described as Ishwara, the ruler. This fact of his being the controller clarifies his position He has not to attain anything in this universe nor is anything unattainable for him We find the same description of this aspect of the Lord in Chap III, Shloka 22 So though the Lord is thus unborn, immutable and controller of all beings, yet he manifests himself, not because of some external force, but because of his own free will. The invisible power becomes visible through the Lord's own power called ' Maya ' This Maya is the form of Prakriti possessing the three Gunas as He says—

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

God's higher Prakriti sustains this universe and hence it is clear that Prakriti cannot be his ruler In the Chap VII Prakriti is divided into two categories, the lower and the higher The lower or Apāra consists of the following eight 'earth, water, fire, air, the sky, mind, intelligence and the ego'. The higher or ' Para ' is in the form of life-principle Of course, as from this Prakriti all the universe came into being, here the Lord refers to this sentient or higher nature of God The purposes of the Divine incarnation such as the establishment of the traditional Dharma or as referring to this Chapter the Karmayoga, the protection of the righteous etc. are given in the stanzas that follow and need careful attention Thus, this important utterance gives us important doctrines about the Creator and His creation—which are the basis of the Indian Faith and Philosophy and hence this Shloka is one of the most memorable epigrams of Lord Krishna Therefore, let every Indian remember such epigrams so that he may understand and realize the secret of the Universe by His grace

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ॥

Bhagawadgita or the "Song Celestial" is not only for the Hindus, but being a work dealing with the philosophy of life—the eternal conflict between duty and pleasure—is universal. Its utility is not confined to any particular sect, country or epoch. It is eulogised by eminent men all over the world. Innumerable commentators have tried to explain the subtle meaning underlying the spoken words of Bhagawan. There are divergent views propounded vehemently by these interpreters and no wonder, ordinary men are baffled and are at their wits' end. So an attempt is always welcome to comprehend the message of Bhagawan. Hence I feel no hesitation in commending this scheme of Gita Mandal, Ratnagiri, of collecting articles from various students of the Bhagawadgita.

The Bhagawadgita is recognised as one of the Upanisads which literally means esoteric knowledge transmitted quietly by one to another who desires and deserves it. Theory and practice are both the subject matter thereof.

All the seven hundred verses are of great importance and interest and it is very difficult to choose any one of them as the best. As श्री ज्ञानेश्वर says there can be nothing like fresh or stale in the case of nectar (अमृत). But as individual tastes differ, divergence of selection by different persons is natural.

I like verse No 66 in the last chapter and have taken it for discussion. The earlier seventeen chapters deal with different topics and the last chapter summarises the teachings of the Gita with great clarity. And the verse I have selected, may be fitly called "The last commandment of the Lord" as the subsequent twelve verses deal with the method and manner of study of the Gita, and minor other topics. It is thus the last word comprising the quintessence of His philosophy.

But for the better appreciation of this verse it is better if we take a bird's eye-view of the background of this great work. Warriors from all over the world assembled for a battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas. Arjuna the hero of the Pandavas, seated in his chariot driven by Shri Krishna, comes to the forefront and surveys the battle-field. He is there to vindicate his rights and win back the kingdom fraudulently taken from them by Kauravas. But when Arjuna surveys the assemblage on either side, he finds there his own kith and kin, relatives, preceptors, elders, and men he revered. He is certain that these people have to be killed before the battle is fought to the finish. On his side also the casualties cannot be less. And thus the destruction of humanity on a colossal scale is inevitable, and that too for the sake of the gain of a paltry kingdom. This shocks and shakes him to his tips, and he pauses to consider. There is sure to be disruption of social order, peace and prosperity.

Under these circumstances, Arjuna decided to disarm himself and give up the idea of fight. Hence an arduous task faced Shri Krishna when he wanted to transform Arjuna from an imbecile, spiritless person into a valiant, energetic hero ready to win the battle. Arjuna's plausible and fallacious arguments had also to be controverted. The nervous breakdown of Arjuna had to be treated. The uncertainty about the result of war was also a problem before Arjuna. Hence the demonstration of the Creator and Destroyer in action had to be visualised before Arjuna could be convinced about the course of future events chalked out by the inexorable Kala wherein Arjuna had to play his part. Ultimately Arjuna is convinced that his ideas of sin and duty are clearly wrong and no sin need attach to his actions if he followed the advice of Shri Krishna who is really the Omnipotent Self.

In this stanza the Lord assures him "I will free you from

all sin, fear not” All his doubts being dispelled Arjuna is ready to do the bidding of Shri Krishna. The way to achieve the end of being free from the sin or the effects of Karma is also indicated. The most important word in this stanza is एकम्. It should be treated as an adverb rather than a pronoun. “सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य” precede “एकम्” and rightly too, for the preliminary stages are described before one can surrender as one unto to the God Immanent. This can be done by giving up—suspending the work of other functions. The word धर्म has various connotations viz. property, duty, function etc. The end in view is the merger of Individual Self into the Universal Soul.

The question then crops up who are these “सर्वे” whose functions are to be stopped if one wants the blessed union with God, and when and how that can be accomplished. So this is a journey from manhood to Godhood. One is familiar with three conditions in life. If we analyse them we may get some clue. Wakefulness, dreams, and sleep are known to everybody and these constitute what is known ordinarily as life. Wakeful condition is the functioning of the senses, mind and intellect and appreciation of the gross objects. In the dream-state gross world and its objects are eliminated and the gross senses are also stilled, but subtle senses, subtle world, mind and intellect are at work. But in sleep neither the gross world and gross senses nor the subtle senses and subtle objects are there. But there is then complete ignorance. So in the wakeful state and dream state the functioning of senses, mind and intellect is there and though this is absent in sleep there being ignorance therein all these states are of no use for union with God. It must be some state like sleep wherein the functioning of senses, mind, and intellect is suspended but which is unlike the sleep in as much as it contemplates the retention of consciousness or self-consciousness without any external aid. The gradation of all these (सर्वे) is given in the Gita. The senses are subtle, the mind is more subtle and intellect is higher than mind and God is beyond the intellect. These are the rungs on the ladder of consciousness. So naturally if and when one wants to ascend to the highest rung the lower ones have got to be abandoned.

As God is avowedly purity incarnate, if one wants to be one with Him, one has to shed off his gross allies just as baser

alloys have to be thrown off when pure gold is the objective. Other religions also preach similar principles that unless one gives up life one cannot reach real Life (Divine).

The verse freely translated would be as follows - Abandoning all functions surrender thyself unto me as one; (then) I will free thee from all sin, fear not

This is what is called heaven, Nirvana, absolution, or enlightenment. Is this not the most desired object for any rational being ? And as this is expounded logically in the Gita its importance cannot be overestimated. Humanity must ever remain grateful to the great Seer who unfolded it for the benefit of mankind.

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मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वर ॥ ३-३० ॥

“ Renouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centred on the self, free from ‘ Hope ’ and ‘ egoism ’ and free from (mental) ‘ fever ’ do you fight ”

It has been evidently declared that the divine opinion of the Lord is that Arjuna should fight. The Pandava Prince is not fit for the higher contemplative life of pure meditation. Action has a tendency to create new impressions which again procreate impulse to act more vigorously. In order to avoid creation of new Vasanas even while acting for the purposes of Vasana-exhaustion, Krishna had already advised a method of acting without the spirit of ego or ego-centric desires. The same theory is now explained here while expounding a technique by which this consummation can actually be brought about.

“ Renounce all actions to Me ” We have already noticed that by the first person pronoun Krishna means the Supreme Self, the Divine, the Eternal. Renouncing all activities unto Him, with a mind soaked with our devoted remembrance of the Self (*adyatmachetasa*) the Lord advises Arjuna to act on. Renunciation of action does not mean an insipid life of inactivity. Actions performed through attachment and desires are renounced, the moment we take out from action the ego-centric and the selfish stink.

A serpent is dangerous only so long as its fangs are not removed.

The moment these are eliminated even the most poisonous reptile becomes a tame creature incapable of harming any one. Similarly action becomes a bondage only when it is performed with a heart laden with selfish desires. Actions performed without desires are not actions at all in as much as they are incapable of producing any painful reactions. Here the renunciation of action only means the giving up of the wrong motives behind our actions.

The purification of the motives is possible only when the mind is made to sing constantly the Divine Songs praising the glories of the Self. In the song of Truth the heart begins to throb with the highest divine impulses. Actions performed in the outer world by such an individual are no more the ordinary actions but they become expressions of the Supreme will through that individual when the limited ego is replaced by the constant feeling of the Lord—as “I am the Supreme” such an individual becomes the most efficient instrument for the expression of the Divine Will.

Not only is it sufficient that we renounce thus all wrong actions, but we have to make a few adjustments in our inner instrument in order to bring out an unobstructive flow of the Creator's Will through us. They are indicated here by the two terms “Without hopes” and “Without ego”

A superficial study of the stanza is sure to confuse the student, and drive him to a dangerous conclusion that Hinduism preaches not a dynamic conscious life but an insentient existence through life in a spirit of cultivated hoplessness !!! But a closer study of the import of these two terms will clearly make us understand that in this stanza Krishna is hinting at a great psychological truth in life “Without hopes”—Hope is the expectation of a happening that is yet to manifest and mature in a future period of time. Whatever be the hope. It belongs not to the present. It refers to a future period of time not yet born. “Without ego”—our ego-centric concept of ourselves is nothing but a bundle of happenings and achievements of ours that happened or were gained in the past moments. Ego is therefore the shadow of the past, and it has got an existent reality only with reference to the dead moments of the past.

If hope be thus the still born child, of the unborn future, ego is the lingering memory of a dead past. To reveal in ego and hope is an attempt on our part to live either with the dead moments

of the past or with the unborn moments of the future. All the while the tragedy is that we miss the present which is the only noble chance that is being given to us to create, to advance, to achieve and to enjoy Krishna advises Arjuna, therefore, to act renouncing both "hope" and "Ego" and this is indeed a primary instruction on how to pour the best that is in us into the present blockading all unintelligent and thoughtless dissipation of the vitalities of our inner personality

The instruction is so exhaustive in vision and complete in its minutest instructions that the stanza under review should be a surprise even to the best of our modern psychologists. Even though the technique so far advised can, and does avoid all wastages of energy among the funeral pyres of the dead moments and in the wombs of unborn time, yet there is a chance for a man of action wasting his potentialities in the very present. This generally comes through our inborn nature to get ourselves unnecessarily over-anxious over our present activities. This feverish anxiety is indicated here by the term fever (ज्वर) Krishna advises that Arjuna should renounce all actions unto the Lord and getting rid of both hope and selfishness, must fight, free from all mental fever. How complete this technique is will be self-evident now to all students of the Gita

The term "fight" is to be understood here "as our individual fight with circumstances in the silent battle of life" Thus the advice is not for Arjuna alone but to all men who would like to live the life fully and intelligently

The importance of this stanza, in the light of modern psychology is that it explains the secret "art of achievement". The terms that are liberally used in this stanza निराशी, निर्मम, विगतज्वरः 1 e. free from hope, from egoism, free from (mental) fever—have an important bearing in the context of the history of modern times I consider this stanza as one of the most important ones as it reveals the most dynamic and practical technique which one may digest, assimilate and follow in order to achieve the highest in life This stanza thus may be considered as a sacred dictum guiding an individual to success, in the field of material gains or striving in the spiritual field of fulfilment

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नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सत' ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ २-१६ ॥

What would I be born within a future life ? What would I carry through with me as innate character to the future ? What gift has the Gita, the Lord's Song, given me that should be remembered forever ? There are so many verses It is very difficult to single out one, but the one which first influenced me the most was learnt while I was still in the land of present birth, far from the land of my spirit—India It is the first half of this verse that is imprinted deep upon my consciousness .

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सत' ।

“Never for the non-existent is there being;
never non-being is there for the existent”.

It is translated often as “The unreal has no being, the real never ceaseth to be”

What are the implications in this marvellous statement of truth ? What is real in one's relations with life, with love, can never be lost If it can be lost, it was never real, in other words it never existed A simple example of this is the relation between two who love each other, who truly love each other Death cannot part souls tuned together the beloved will be felt as within one's very self when the body is dropped But suppose that the relation-

ship was a superficial one of eating, drinking, living together in the same house but the two were never really attuned to the real ? Then when death comes and takes one away, there will be a loss—not of the real, for it never existed, but of that unreal association which was only a shadow of an unachieved real. The story is told that a woman lost her husband and she prayed to an angel asking if she would ever see him again ? An angel appeared and asked her : “ What did you two have in common ? What did you do together ? ” The woman answered: “ We lived together, we ate together, we went everywhere together ” “ That is not enough”, sternly said the angel. The woman thought and falteringly said, “ One day we talked of God together, ” “ Oh then ” said the Angel with shining eyes, “ you will see him again ”. One moment they had touched reality in the highest concept either knew and had made the eternal link in the reality of their inner Self which is the One Self in all lives, so never could they again be separate. A number of wives have testified that they felt their husbands as living, breathing realities within when the body dropped away, though sometimes it took a day or so to establish the contact; so wrapped up they first were in grief in the mistaken thought that they had lost their all

Has something very dear you thought you had achieved dropped away from you ? It cannot be so if you ever really achieved it, or your eyes are blinded, because there is another path you should immediately tread and your frustration means you should take another path. A great musician in another life may deliberately forego the path of art in this life to gain a closer touch with the path of sacrifice and service in homely duties. Is the music lost ? A thousand times no—it is only held in abeyance and even in this life in later years the person may sing forth a song far deeper in its real touch of life than the song of other lives

A person may tread the path of purity but become isolated from love of humanity through the selfish element and have to be purged in a life by having closer contact with sin to learn his unity with all, but the innate purity of other lives will assert itself and the lotus flower will spring from the mire and blossom in the sun now cleansed from all taint

So we try to make every moment a touch with the ever-existent real. We recognize in what is around us the illusory

uneal that will pass away, leaving not an indication of its ever having touched us, save that in its impact on us it made us come closer to the Real of which it was the antithesis.

We throw ourselves wholly into the work of the Lord as He enjoined in XII 10 "Mat-karma-paramo bhava" till we can say we have fulfilled his injunction "My Word Supreme do thou become". When by devotion we can recognize Him in all life-sinner and saint, pure gold and clod of earth, when we can receive from others neither their virtues nor their vices, but only see the one struggling Reality, striving to free itself from the unreality that surrounds it, then we can live a life in which the Real is so dominant and the unreal so transient that, we can become a Reality Seer of whom it will be said as in the last line of II. 16 : "उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तरत्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः—Of the two also has been seen the ultimate, verily, of these by the Reality Seers".

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मा नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मान मत्परायण. ॥ ९-३४ ॥

The Bhagawadgita verse which has impressed me most is this last verse of Chapter 9.

This verse seems to be the kernel or rather quintessence of the whole of the celestial song—Shrimat Bhagawadgita.

I assert this, as this is the only verse, three-fourth of which is verbatim repeated in verse No. 65 of the last chapter of this grand work. The one fourth—that is substituted there is all the more important for an aspirant of realisation, as the Lord gives therein a guarantee, a promise, that he who lives in the way prescribed in the above verse 34 shall certainly come to me, and this “coming to me” meaning meeting the Lord is no less significant to the aspirant than any thing else, as verse 15 of chapter 8 of Bhagawadgita clearly states that “Having come to Me, these great souls do not get back to re-birth, the place of sorrow, impermanent, for they have reached the highest perfection”.

Looking at this verse (9-34) one finds, in it four ‘*mat*’s and two ‘*mam*’s ‘*Mat*’ means ‘mine’ and ‘*Mam*’ means ‘me’. As we all know these are the genitive and objective cases respectively of the word ‘I’. The word ‘I’ stands throughout Bhagawadgita for the Lord Himself. For the full comprehension of the meaning of the verse we must therefore first ascertain the meaning which Lord gives to His ‘I’

In chapter 10 verse 20 He says, "I, O Arjuna, am the self seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the very end of beings." In the last verse of the same chapter after recounting His divine revelations (*Vibhūti*) He says "I support this entire universe pervading it with a single fraction of Myself" Verse sixth chapter IV says "Though I am unborn, and My self (is) imperishable, though (I am) the Lord of all creatures, yet establishing Myself in My own nature, I come into (empirical) being through My power (*māyā*)". In the eighth verse of chapter 9 He says "Nature (*Prakṛiti*) is my Own". In verse 7 chapter 15 He says 'Jīva is a fragment (or fraction) of my own self' and in the last verse 27 of chapter 14 He clearly says "For I am the abode of Brahman, the Immortal and the Imperishable, of eternal law and of absolute bliss" This proves that Bhagawadgita principally describes from the start to the end the Lord's manifest form And this is but proper, since there is ample evidence in favour of the historicity of Kṛishna and Arjuna to day

Dr Radhakrishnan has well said, "The theory of Avatars is an eloquent expression of the law of the spiritual world If God is looked upon as the saviour of man, He must manifest Himself, whenever the forces of evil threaten to destroy human values Avatara is a descent of God into man and not an ascent of man into God, which is the case of a liberated soul" Even Shankarananda, a staunch follower of Shankaracharya in his commentary on verse 12 chapter 13 admits that materially speaking (*vyavaharika drishtya*) Aishvaram Rupam is 'Satya' (true) - on Shruti authority and that by His worship and grace an aspirant (*mumukshu*) gets liberation (*mukti*), not satisfied with saying so much, he also says Gita has prescribed in verse 55 of Chapter 11 the five means (*Sadhana*s) by which this grace can be obtained The verse lays down " (1) He who does work for Me, (2) he who looks upon Me as his goal, (3) he who worships Me, (4) free from attachment, (5) who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to Me, O Pandava (Arjuna) " Looked at from this point of view the top verse of this essay lays down the same course for meeting the Lord It says " On Me fix thy mind; to ME be devoted, worship ME, thus having disciplined thyself, with Me as thy goal, to ME shalt thou come"

On the strength of the authorities above cited, however, we cannot at once conclude that the opinion of those who assert that Gita speaks only of the manifest (Vyakta) is correct. Gita Chapter 8 verses 20 and 21 say, " But beyond this unmanifested (Prakriti) there is yet another unmanifested Eternal Being who does not perish even when all existences perish. This unmanifested is called the Imperishable. Him they speak of as Supreme status. Those who attain to him return not. That is my supreme abode". In chapter 7 verses 24 and 25 the Lord emphatically states that His Vyakta—visible nature is *mayic* (illusory, unreal) but that beyond this *mayic* nature, He has another highest nature invisible to the senses. He says " Men of no understanding think of Me, the unmanifest, as having manifestation, not knowing higher nature changeless and Supreme Veiled by My creative power (*yoga-maya*) I am not revealed to all. This ignorant world knows Me not, the unborn, the unchanging "

Even though the Lord may be invisible He may have attributes (Gunas). The Bhagawadgita authorities quoted in support of this view are .— "Taking hold of nature which is my own, I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings which are helpless, being under the control of nature (Prakriti) (9-8); the Lord abides in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing them to turn round by His power as if they were mounted on a machine (18 6). For I am the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices, (9 24) (and since) different states of beings proceed from Me alone (10 5) whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship, I make that faith of his steady Endowed with that faith he seeks the worship of such a one and from him he obtains his desires, the benefits being decreed by Me alone." (7, 21 and 22) .

As against this view of the Lord with attributes, the Lord Himself says in Bhagawadgita, " Work does not defile Me, nor do I have any yearning for its fruit" While all kinds of work are done by the modes of nature (Gunas), he whose soul is bewildered by the self-sense thinks "I am the doer" (3 27). When the seer perceives no agent other than the modes (Guna) and knows also that which is beyond the modes, he attains to My being (14 19) The Sovereign self does not create for the people agency (*kartitvam*), nor does He act Nor does He connect

works with their fruits. It is nature (*srabhava*) that works out (these) The all-pervading spirit does not take on the sin or the merit of any. Wisdom is enveloped by ignorance, thereby creatures are bewildered (*muhyanti* 5, 11. and 15).

It is not that there are only these two descriptions of the invisible Lord. In some places both these descriptions are to be found, "My spirit which is the source of all beings sustains the beings but does not abide in them (9 5). The beginningless, supreme Brahman is said to be neither existent nor non-existent (13 12). He appears to have the qualities of all senses and is yet without (any of) the senses, unattached and yet supporting all, free from the Gunas (dispositions of Prakriti) and yet enjoying them (13 14). He is without and within all beings. He is unmoving and moving. He is too subtle to be known. He is far away and yet is He near (13 15). He is undivided and yet he seems to be divided among beings (13 16)." The seeming mixture of both the descriptions Vyakta and Avyakta point to the universal truth that Brahman is one without a second; that all this is Brahman, (*sarvam khalu idam brahma*); that there is nothing-nothing other than Brahman (*neha nanasti kunchana*). This is confirmed by two Gita verses.—"He is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable and unchanging" (2.25) "This supreme Self is imperishable, is without beginning, without qualities" (13 31). This shows that Gita considers the pure, qualityless, limbless, modificationless, unthinkable and beginningless (Shuddha, Nirguna, Niravayava, Nirvikara, Achintya and Anadi) nature (Svarupa) as the highest of all.

And how should one be ever in tune with this highest Svarupa of the Lord? This verse (9 34), the subject selected for this essay, gives answer to this query. "This verse reveals the ultimate mystery, the supreme teaching of our Lord. Through worship, sacrifice and reverence, all must be directed to the Lord. We must let ourselves go in a simple, sustained, trustful surrender of ourselves to Him and open ourselves out to Him. Then God discloses His nature, His graciousness and love and eagerness to take us back to Him. Our spiritual life depends as much on our going to Him as on His coming to us. Not only do we ascend but He also descends for us." The poet Tagore says,

Hast thou not heard His silent steps ?

He comes, comes, ever comes

And when He comes what does he do ? He says, “ To those who are in constant union with Me and worship Me with Love, I grant the power of understanding by which they come unto me” (10.10) “And having come to Me, these great souls do not get back to rebirth, the place of sorrow, impermanent, for they have reached the highest perfection.” (8 15)

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सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ ५-१८ ॥

The Bhagawadgita, significantly described as 'the Bible of Humanity' can be compared to a many-serried garland of gems of lucent beauty and splendour, excelling each other in brilliance, in tone, in richness of colour and quality. To choose a single gem out of such a series of rare, unearthly brilliance, is indeed a difficult task. But the human mind is selective. Its choice is mainly guided by that which appeals most to one's heart, one's emotions and understanding and fires one's imagination. It chooses out of a whole lot some one single item which has the capacity to stir with the strange and moving attraction the central fibres of one's being and penetrate into one's innermost depths. And yet such a choice out of a whole series of a single item does not detract the value of others, for each in its setting is perfect and possesses an innate quality and harmony and character peculiar to its own and retains it independently. Thus the supreme and perfect artistry of the Gita does not suffer in beauty and appeal even if a single verse is selected for special treatment. Such a choice is a choice arising out of the individual's inner structure and is therefore individualistic in character. And yet some verses in the Gita possess an irresistible charm and have a universal appeal. Though the whole book has touched millions of hearts, some of its verses have a singular universal appeal. And no one need be amazed if people who have not read the whole

of the Gita have yet accepted one such verse as the cardinal article of their faith of the philosophy of their conduct.

The Gita is indeed an image in words—finite though they be—of the Infinite. And what is remarkable is that this image is perfect, well-proportioned and beautiful and no wonder it is so, because for once in human history the infinite was describing itself. For the Infinite, indeed, was Lord Krishna, the Brahman incarnating Itself to teach a distressed humanity the sublime practical truth that dualism was but the means to realise non-dualism, that the one manifesting Himself as many was still the One, Changeless, Immutable, Transcendent and Imperishable, the many being the conceptual images of a finite mind, ever changing in scope and dimension, trying to reach the infinite which lay stretching across the Universe in silent repose.

How then could this Infinite be realised. It is in this context that I refer to the above mentioned verse in the Gita which I like most

I like it because it provides the very key to unlock the gates of Heaven, of self-realisation, of pure Consciousness, of Vaikuntha etc. call it whatever you may like. For herein is contained the inalienable character of declaration made and gifted by the Divine to the human race guaranteeing its ultimate right to Liberation.

Let us then try to examine and understand why this verse is regarded as of great importance and has a wide appeal. But for that purpose we shall have to examine in brief the basis of discord in the mind of Arjuna and how such a stupendous declaration came to be made as the final summing up of the entire discourse, as the crowning glory, as it were, of the instructions given to Arjuna. The discord in the mind of Arjuna was neither due to a sense of frustration arising out of a fear of killing his friends, relations, elders etc. and of taking upon his head the dire consequences of such a sinful deed, nor was it due to an escapist upsurge, nor because of innate desire to eschew suffering, nor, indeed, out of an insatiable desire to renounce the world of Vairagya. The roots of the conflict lay deeper.

It is our common experience that all conflicts in life arise out of an incorrect assessment of the values of life, of situations, environments, of circumstances arising out of totally miscon-

ceived ideas, notions, perverted thinking and absence of balanced judgment, about the real nature of things. The failure of the process which harmonises the working of the inner equipment, the mind, the emotions, the intellect, vis-a-vis the facts of life, brings about a disjoinder of contact with the reality, the Self. And when this happens, the pattern of relationship one establishes with the world about him, though extremely unreal, false and impermanent, makes him accept it as real, true and permanent. His discriminative faculty (*buddhi*) then arrogates to itself a character foreign to its nature and loses its original attributes and therefore, its power of correct perception. Arjuna's mental condition was precisely disjointed because of such a mal-adjustment. Psychologists would interpret it as thought-blocking, emotional incongruity and delusions, characteristics of a schizophrenic personality. Arjuna had truly strayed away, swayed by a devastating conflict within from the centre of his being. And yet he was aware of his objective. In verse 7 of chapter II he says that he longed for the 'Shreyas' Eternal Bliss as against the 'Preyas' material happiness. But his approach towards its acquisition was totally misconceived. His objective was clear but he soon loses its perspective when he saw that the war he was asked to fight was an act which to him appeared as one leading to Preyas and defeating his goal. He could not reconcile himself with the realities of life and the conflict arose and the mind and the intellect became confused. He failed to realise that the path of Preyas, the active participation in life was never the end, that it could by enlightened understanding be made into the means to the end the Shreyas; that the field of action before him was in harmony with the natural law of his being and that ultimate fulfilment would follow his acceptance rather than his rejection of it. Arjuna's disjointed mental processes failed to comprehend this and he confused the issues. Instead of the 'Swarupa-avastithi' he accepted 'Swarupva' identification with the elements foreign to the Swarupa, the self, the Real Nature. He identified himself with the objective world around him, forgetting that the Cosmic Law functioning at the behest of one Supreme Power was no respecter of individual thought-processes but functioned with the essential rhythm of the Infinite Life, that God fulfilled Himself in many ways unknown to man.

When Shri Krishna saw through this colossal crisis in Arjuna's mind, he set about at once to relieve his mento-emotional and intellectual tension and to restore the balance. Shri Krishna explained that the basis of perception, real knowledge, lay in accepting as natural the changing nature of the Prakriti and all its evolutes and recognising the unchangeability of the Self. By a resort to the philosophic mysticism (Sankhya Yoga) the nature of the Self or the Atma, the Immutable, the Unchanging and the Imperishable, could be known, Arjuna is asked to tread the path of Buddhiyoga, the Yoga of enlightened understanding, by which the intellect purified, is able to comprehend the real nature of things. For the path of Shreyas could not be trod by a seeker whose intellect continued to remain covered by layers of worldly dust, conditioned by likes and dislikes, swayed by emotions of love, hate, anger, fear and a variety of thoughts of pleasure and pain. Shri Krishna counselled Arjuna to be Sthitaprajna, the man of balanced and steady intellect (Chapter II).

Shri Krishna also dwells on the importance of an active life, on the path of active mysticism (Karmayoga Ch III), on the need of acting without attachment, abjuring the ghost of doership, on the eternal laws of motion which kept everything under the sway of Prakriti active and restless. The nature of Karma (action), Akarma (reposeful action) and Vikarma (obstructive action) is also explained (Ch IV) showing how even the Incarnate Beings capable of transcending the laws of Prakriti function within these very laws, only to show to the erring humanity that working in harmony with these laws alone would help one to reach one's ultimate goal.

He points out that the sin of which Arjuna was so afraid lay not in being true to himself, to the laws of his being but in accepting as true the other values foreign to his nature, his Swarupa, his Atma. The theory of the Yajnas is discussed to show the co-operation between the Divine and the human, functioning within the rhythm of Prakriti. He is also told that for one aspiring for union with Self, desireless Karma was an inescapable duty.

Further again, Shri Krishna purifies and canalizes the emotional being of Arjuna by showing how abundance of emo-

tions wasted on ephemeral things could be focussed by self-effacement, devotion and surrender for one's chosen ideal, how the mind could be made aware of the Omnipresence of Reality, manifesting itself in its many aspects through all created beings (Ch X) Shri Krishna showed how incorrect and manifestly wrong was the pattern of relationship he had established with the world by symbolically giving him Cosmic Vision (Ch XI) enabling him to see the dance of the Prakriti at the behest of the Purusa

Shri Krishna also explained how the discord arose, because of the perpetual conflict between the Divine and the non-divine (Daivi and Asui) forces, the higher and the lower instincts in man (Ch XVI) and how the motivating and perpetually contending forces of the Prakriti, the three Gunas, operating within the being of man, colour all his activities and influence the totality of one's life (Ch XVII) It was only after analysing and dissecting Arjuna's mind through all these discourses and pointing out the patent errors of his personality, explaining the factors conducive to his well-being and illumination that the Lord sums up by saying 'Abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in me' This, as it were, in a nutshell sums up the entire teaching of the Gita on the nature of Reality, the nature of Prakriti, Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, the interplay of three Gunas, Samnyasa and the evolution of the Prakriti in the Universe (Ch XIII).

What does the command to abandon all Dharmas mean and what does Dharma indicate? The word 'Dharma' etymologically means that which supports and if we try objectively to understand its meaning, we will find that all life is sustained by an imperceptible, indestructible force, a power which is ever active working in and through the entire creation It is the essence of all existence on all planes of life, in all its manifestations, bereft of which everything would cease to exist It constitutes the very vital essence of man's being, the essential attribute objectively of an Attributeless Reality For, nothing would exist without it Fire would be no fire without its essential attribute, heat, nor water, water, devoid of its essence, Rasa or fluidity All the elements in nature manifest in a limited way, the presence of that power, and all these limited manifestations, which exist, constitute the

Dharma of that thing But even so the part reflecting the presence of the whole is not the whole.

In Chapter X, Shri Krishna has explained the presence and all the pervasiveness of that sustaining power in all created things. The things exist because of its ever-answering presence. In human beings, it is the Atma, without whose power, the body, the mind, the intellect, would cease to function. It is the essence of one's being and, therefore, one's Dharma, the supporter, the sustainer. If Shreyas is to be attained, the realisation and the experience of this Supreme truth must be there so that identification with the Name, Form and non-essentials of all things, sentient and insentient which is accepted as Dharma would cease. Thus what is thought to be renounced is the attributes foreign to the nature of the self, viz, friends, relations, sin and sinlessness, vice and virtue, joy and sorrow, experienced by the ego. These do not belong to the self. They are the Dharmas of a foreign character accepted as its own by the ego in ignorance. And, it is this ignorance of the ego that all these non-essentials of no lasting value, reflecting the mode of Prakriti in its natural functioning through its constituent forces, the three Gunas, are superimposed upon the Atma. They belong to the realm of Prakriti and constitute its Dharma but never of the Self, which stands aloof as a witness of the drama. He is the source of all Light and Life, Light of all Lights, beyond all darkness (Ch. XIII). Even the ego's experience of joy and sorrow by the Power of the self, though separated from Brahman by Avidya, belongs to the Brahman, even as the wave separated from the mass of the water belongs to the ocean. Thus, the relinquishment of all that is foreign to the Atma, i. e. everything that is Anatman, is commanded to be given up. It would not be irrelevant here to quote the famous declaration of Jesus - "Render unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar and render unto God that which belongs to God", which means that a seeker should abandon everything that belongs to the earth and matter and accept everything that belongs to the realm of the spirit. In the Isha Upanisad also, the opening verse declares the same truth. Thus the jettisoning of the superimposed accretions of the mind is the prime condition for the seeker of Bliss. Arjuna had opted for Shreyas, and, therefore, he is asked to do so, to be

himself, to remove the inner disharmony by self-adjustment, to realise that Atma alone is real and sovereign. It is because of that self that the world existed. In telling phrases in the Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad, the sage Yajnavalkya tells Gaṅgī that all things are dear to man not because they are things but because of the Self, and that Self alone was to be known, comprehended and contemplated upon. A wrong conception about the nature of the world and the Self gives a misdirection to the mind and its activities are shaped accordingly, accepting the immediate sensory world as real. The Dharma for Arjuna was the law of his Being. Therefore, the mandate '*sarvadharman parityajya*' abandonment of all non-essentials, non-identification with the Dharma of the ego, senses, etc. but remaining steadfast in one's self is given.

The next line of the verse contains the mandate 'Resort thyself to Me'. When the self is realised, one goes to the Self alone. In Chapter X of the Gita, Shri Krishna says that He is the soul of all beings. In this verse, 'Me' does not therefore, stand for any incarnated being or a personal God. In verse 48 again, Arjuna is asked to take refuge in Him '*tameva sharanam gaccha*'. The 'Me' and 'Him' are thus synonyms of the Self, the Purusa. It would be illogical to assume otherwise after the revelation of the cosmic vision in Chapter XI. The mandate, therefore, is to stand established in the centre of the self, '*swarupa-avasthana*' and then comprehend the world '*sharanam*' or surrender implies a totality of inner harmony of mind, the emotion and the intellect, an abiding awareness of the one alone to the absolute exclusion of all else. That alone leads to ultimate bliss. And, when such self-effacement takes place and the intellect is illumined, the ego dissolves, and liberation comes. 'I shall release thee from all sins' is the guarantee of liberation, sin, in this context, means all that obstructs the goal. For a self-realised soul, everything is the play of Prakṛiti, and the witness stands aloof untouched by its modes of manifestations. For such a one, there is no bondage.

The Gita preaches the dynamism of life. The spontaneity of life is not denied by it but it teaches 'efficiency in action' ('*yogah karmasu kaushalam*') and inner equipoise, ('*samatvam yoga uchyate*'). And, thus, in the midst of life, man has to

resolve his conflict and reach his goal. The Gita is indeed called Yogashastra, in the sense that it teaches the way of synthesising the diffused patterns of consciousness and realising the state of pure consciousness by Yogasadhanas described in Chap. VI.

The whole concept of this verse so pregnant with the highest truth is that for a man to reach his goal of perfection in life, he has to learn by clear perception to differentiate between the real and the unreal, that the self alone is supreme. Realising this, he should remain steadfast within the centre of his Self, and then work out his way in life fully attuned by the inner law of his being and forever remain attuned with the cosmic law. This dwelling within resolves all conflicts. 'Know thyself' is the eternal message of the Upanisads. And, asking Arjuna to abandon all Dharmas is only asking him to alter his focus and go back to the source, the Self from which he has strayed away. When self is thus known and experienced, when the accretions are removed, what is to bind and whom? For, there is no doer nor the deed, nor the enjoyer nor the enjoyed. But there is only the witness of an enthrilling drama, the लीला of the Lord. For, in such a state the Karmashayas, i. e., the repository of all actions, is rendered impotent. Its creative potential is destroyed. There is thus then, a renewal of the mind, an integration of one's inner equipment with one's source and a recollectedness of one's true nature. This verse indeed, in short significant phrases, it provides the key to the transformation of life, indicates a philosophy of conduct and helps to reshape, revitalise, regenerate and rebuild one's being. No wonder it has a universal appeal.

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क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ९-३९ ॥

My devotee never perisheth

Oh Kaunteya, know it for certain that my devotee does not at all perish, what to talk of his fall. I place my Bhakta, devotee on par with Me by uplifting him to my level. After attaining that status my devotee merges into Me, his identity gets dissolved into me. Thereafter his entity does not remain distinct from Me; his 'Me' and 'Mine' get themselves dissolved into Me and Mine. He has sacrificed everything unto Me and consequently nothing of his is left to perish. To say that My devotee has perished is to say that there was some deficiency in his devotion. I assure you my devotee does never perish, न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति

Oh Arjuna, after the disappearance of his material body my devotee becomes immortal. Then, what is the nature of that devotee of mine who attains immortality? He is that man who has nothing in him except devotion for Me. There is not the slightest possibility of perishing for a man who has approached me with 'Ananya'—one without a second-devotion for me. The devotion of a devotee who has passed all his life with such devotion for Me after the disappearance of his physical frame, transforms itself into the various life-atoms permeating the cosmos. His life-long single-minded devotion gets itself mixed with permanent atoms of the Brahmananda and attains a stage which is beyond Time and Memory. That

devotion thus transformed does not get worn by lapse of time. It is never forgotten, but the vibrations of devotion thus permeating the Brahmic phantoms in the atmosphere become close and dense with the lapse of time and attain the status of memorials of the devotee in the minds of Godly and goodly persons of future. Thus my devotee, Oh Arjuna, is alive even in the generations to come. Incomparable and faithful devotion to God uniformly and incessantly practised during the whole span of life is in itself his invisible temple in memorium. Just as the children act as memorials to the parents in succeeding generations, even so the ceaseless and faithful devotion practised during a life-span acts true memorial to the devotee in this world for future generations, after the devotee's soul merges into the cosmic soul. That being so, a man who has passed a ceaselessly and single-mindedly devoted life, becomes immortal. He never perishes न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ।

Oh Arjuna, Devotion, Devotee and Deity are in reality one. Just as the knower, knowledge and the knowable are intrinsically one and are connected by a pleasant, yet delicate and unbreakable silk chord, even so, the Devotion, Devotee and the Deity have been joined by means of a subtle and delicate silk string. In the world these three often appear to be separated but on a healthy and comprehensive view (सम्यक् दर्शन) their oneness is ultimately realised. If God is imperishable and indestructible so is His devotee. If devotion is a thing which does not perish in the world, a man passing his life in devotion does not also perish. A devotee's mind, speech, intellect, body, soul, nay his everything are dedicated to God. Every thing of such a devotee has been integrated into God. Such a devotee has nothing with him to perish. It is therefore that God trumpeted from Himalayan tops. "My devotee does not perish न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ।

Who says that Tukaram has died away? Who says that Narsinh Mehta and Mirabai have perished? These devotees and the like are immortal and imperishable. True, they are not present before us in flesh and blood. On the expiry of the term allotted to them on the earth, their souls have left their physical frames but nonetheless they are indeed with us in their (अव्यय and अक्षर) immutable and indestructible form. So long as

man has a vocal organ on earth, they are immortal : so long as human beings are not bereft of faith in God—which is never to be the case—these devotees will not be forgotten, their names will never be obliterated. The numberless phantoms of life moving to and fro in the cosmos are the real commemorative of these devotees. They are message bearers of their lives. Hence it is that the Lord of Brahmanda has permanently assured his ‘one—without a second —’ devotee Arjuna in unequivocal and emphatic terms—My devotee does not perish. न मे भक्त. प्रणश्यति ।

❀ ❀

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूताना येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ १८-४६ ॥

To understand the message of the Gita it is necessary to know what Karmayoga is. The philosophy of Karmayoga is graphically enunciated in the verse of the Gita quoted above. This means :

“He from whom all beings arise and by whom all this (universe) is pervaded, by worshipping Him through performance of his duties, a man attains perfection.”

In this verse the Gita explains in a nutshell the philosophy of Karmayoga (The gospel of dedicated actions). We are asked to perform all our actions not with a selfish motive of gratifying our carnal desires, but with the pure motive of worshipping God always remembering that He abides in the hearts of all beings. (Iswarah sarvabhutanam hriddeshe'rajuna tisthati). Actions thus performed gradually lead us to the state of spiritual perfection.

Actions of a man who does not realise the spiritual nature of human beings are inspired either by selfishness or by egoism that leads to strife and misery

Today we see around us a terrible strife going on for power and wealth which is threatening humanity with total destruction. If humanity is to be saved from this catastrophe a spiritual awakening is necessary. If it is to be saved from extinction it must realise the internal spiritual unity of all life

The man who realises this truth is freed from selfishness, jealousy and hatred. How can he hate when he sees God everywhere ? All his work is worship to him. Performing all his actions with this spirit of worship he attains spiritual perfection. The description of a Yogī who has attained this state is given in the following verse .

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ६-३२ ॥

“ O’ Arjuna ! He who sees with equality everything (and) likens himself with others whether in pleasure or in pain, is deemed to be a perfect Yogī ”.

When a man reaches this state of spiritual perfection all human beings are equal in his eyes. He hates none. He loves all irrespective of their caste, creed, country or colour. He is always prepared to give others the same freedom of thought, speech and action that he desires for himself. He always remains at peace with himself, at peace with others and at peace with God. This perfect Spiritual State is the ideal that is kept before mankind by the Gita. Let us try to mould our lives according to this ideal and be happy. If human beings are inspired by this ideal and act according to it, they would settle their differences in the spirit of mutual sympathy and co-operation. This spirit of mutual sympathy and co-operation is the real foundation of universal peace and brotherhood. Those fortunate souls who have realised the spiritual nature of the universe should act according to their realisation and try to make others realise the truth. There is no higher service to God and humanity than this. To inculcate this truth in us we should ever remember the divine message of the Gita —

DO ALL YOUR DUTIES IN A SPIRIT OF DEDICATION, ALWAYS REMEMBERING THAT GOD ABIDES IN THE HEARTS OF ALL BEINGS

If one wished to become a perfect Karmayogī, one should concentrate his attention on the following twelve important steps, which are in a nutshell a pathway to Karmayoga —

1. Try to understand and assimilate the Divine philosophy of Karma Yoga by studying the Gita

2. To inculcate in you the Divine Message recite every day with a receptive mind at least a few verses from the Gita either in Sanskrit or its version in your own tongue.

3. Before going to bed at night pray to God that all should be happy, healthy and prosperous. Go to sleep in a meditative mood with the determination of becoming a Karmayogi.

4. Do all your duties fearlessly with a spirit of dedication always remembering that God abides in the hearts of all beings.

5. Let all your behaviour be inspired by Truth, Love and Self-control. Do not hate anybody, because to hate any being is to hate God.

6. To develop your mental powers devote at least half an hour every day to concentration and meditation.

7. Devote at least half an hour every week to introspection or self-examination. Try earnestly to eradicate the evils in you and to increase your virtues.

8. Do all your actions with a calm and a balanced mind disregarding pleasure or pain, success or failure.

9. You are indebted to the society or to the nation in which you are born. Therefore contribute some portion of your income to religious, social or national cause. Be a true nationalist with an International outlook.

10. Do not submit to injustice. Fight it with proper means.

11. Remember that 'Health is Wealth'. Try to maintain your health through proper diet, regular exercise, deep breathing and sufficient rest.

12. While trying to elevate yourself morally and spiritually help others as well to elevate themselves.

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सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेक शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः । १८-६६ ।

The divine song 'Bhagawadgita' ends with the 73rd verse of the 18th Chapter. Arjuna answered in unequivocal terms that his delusion was removed, that he had gained knowledge by 'his' grace and that he stood freed from doubts and therefore he was ready to carry out 'his' bidding

In the verse 67th to 71 of the 18th Chapter, is the advice to spread the secret wisdom, taught in the verses 64 to 66 among the proper persons. The secret wisdom due to its universal appeal has become so appealing that by its preaching the very preachers became happy and satisfied by the grace of Bhagawan Shri Krishna.

I have selected the 66th verse of Chapter 18th as I think that the sum and substance of the 'Gita' is crystalised in it. We find therein the most secret and Supreme advice of Bhagawan (Lord) Shri Krishna and I have decided to explain the same in this article, in the lines that follow —

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेक शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ।

The substance of the above verse is

“ Sorrow not, I shall liberate you from all sins if you will fulfil the following conditions —

(1) Abandon all duties, (2) Surrender to me alone to seek refuge ”

This is the common advice to the world represented by Arjuna.

Even today this 'secret advice' is equally useful as sorrow, unhappiness, doubts, delusion, unrest and dissatisfaction reign supreme everywhere.

- (1) Dissatisfaction begets unhappiness,
- (2) Doubts and delusions give rise to dissatisfaction and
- (3) Doubts and delusions result in unwisdom i. e. want of wisdom.

At the beginning of the Bharatiya war Arjuna was in delusion. Bhagawan Shri Krishna taught him his duty according to the Vedas and said,

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ १६-२४ ॥

“ Therefore let the divine Vedas (शास्त्रम्) be your authority or guide in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; knowing what has been ordained by the dictates of the divine Vedas, you ought to do your duty in this world ”.

The advice of Bhagawan Shri Krishna could not be grasped by Arjuna; on the contrary, he found himself deep in manifold doubts. Therefore, Shri Krishna was compelled to trace all the knowledge and the 'secret wisdom' of the 'Dharma' sponsored by the 'Upanisads' which are, as you know, the brief summaries of the 'Vedas' themselves

“ To be of God ” is an attainment which can be acquired by the combination of (1) Action (कर्मन्), (2) Wisdom (ज्ञान), (3) Concentration (ध्यान) and (4) Devotion (भक्ति), Devotion being the most important amongst them. The unification of these all together is called 'Yoga' in Gita. Without 'Devotion' all other paths are incomplete. But to start with, the knowledge of God is absolutely necessary. The four schools of the 'Vedantic Philosophy', which we are today acquainted with, were not obtaining at the time of Arjuna. There was the 'Pure Vedic Philosophy' taught by Shri Krishna to Arjuna.

The God is omnipresent like space (आकाश) But at some particular places, called 'The divine glories' in Chapter X He can be known clearly. When Arjuna was eager to see the vision of the 'Cosmic form of God' and Bhagawan Shri Krishna showed him the vision as in Chapter XI, then Arjuna exclaimed

“ The most secret word of the spiritual wisdom has been spoken of by you, as an act of kindness to me Thanks to you, this delusion of mine has disappeared ”.

The background prepared

Bhagawan Shri Krishna said—“ O Arjuna, he, who works for my sake, depends on me, is devoted to me, has no attachment and is free from malice towards all beings, reaches me (XI 55) ”. The background was prepared for the ‘ secret wisdom ’ in Chapter X-15 thus—

“ It is I, who am installed in the hearts of all (as their inner voice) Memory, wisdom and the ratiocinative faculty also emanate from me It is I, whom the four Vedas seek to know, nay, it is I who am the author of ‘ Vedanta ’ as well as the knower of the Vedas ”. Again the Lord says in XV—“ The undeluded person who thus knows me (Bhagawan Shri Krishna as a full incarnation of the universal God) in reality, as the ‘ Supreme person ’ (पुरुषोत्तम) knowing all, worships me with his whole being (19) ” —“ Oh, sinless Arjuna, in this way this most secret teaching has been imparted by me Assimilating this, man becomes wise and attains supreme satisfaction ” (20).

Dear readers! ponder over, here Bhagawan Shri Krishna has manifested himself as ‘ Universal God ’ In the vast time of the universe different situations occur when all the people collectively behave according to the laws of the Vedas (revealed by God), truth and justice (ऋतम् च सत्यम् च) being their base The world existed for many a century in such a situation in the past.

Some times the majority of the masses collectively undermine the Vedas and behave as they like The laws are misinterpreted but then untruth and injustice are their mainstay Arjuna was standing on the boundary line near to this kind of age and today we are passing exactly through such a period of sorrow and unhappiness This is the effect of our collective misbehaviour caused by ignorance and delusions

Question before us today

Every person and nation hanker after happiness and satisfaction All are mad after them What is the remedy for that ?

Nobody could answer this question satisfactorily. Bhagwan Shri Krishna says in Chapter 18 verse 55—"Through devotion he comes to know me in reality what and who I am and thereby knowing me in essence he forthwith enters into me".

First become the devotee and you can accept this remedy. Here it will be useful to cite some verses from the ancient famous authority viz. "*Varada Bhakti-Sutras*".

सा त्वस्मिन् परमत्रेनरूपा ॥२॥ अमृतरूपा च ॥३॥

यल्लब्ध्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति, अमृतो भवति, तृप्तो भवति ॥४॥

"This devotion to God is in the form of (1) intimate supreme love (2) and in the form of immortality (3) He, who gets it becomes 'Siddha' (perfect) and becomes immortal and satisfied".

God has his own method for the management of the Universe according to His scheme. The duty of the devotee is to join the scheme. Bhagawan Sri Krishna says (18-61)—"Arjuna, the Lord dwells in the hearts of the being, who are mounted on the automation of the body causing them, by his illusive power, to revolve". But he who does not heed this advice shall perish as said by the Lord in Chapter 18 verse 58—

"With your mind thus fixed on me you will get over all difficulties by My grace. But if, out of pride you will not listen to Me (Bhagawan Sri Krishna) you will be utterly doomed".

This is the challenge of God to the human race. How to react to it is our own choice. But for the devotees Bhagawan shows the way in Chapter 18—verse 62, —"seek refuge in 'Him' (Sri Krishna) alone, (not in any prophet or son) with all your being (i.e. body, speech and mind) Arjuna, through 'His' (Sri Krishna the universal God's) grace you shall obtain peace and the eternal abode".

It is the secret knowledge

"Thus has knowledge, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me (Bhagawan Sri Krishna) having reflected on it fully, do as you like"—(Chapter 18 verse 63)

Now, here ends the Gita. But while concluding the song, Lord Sri Krishna gives in three verses (18—64 to 66) the main

impression of the talk and the sum and substance of the whole conversation. Out of these 3, the 3rd (66th) is the most important—“ Listen now again to my supreme word, most secret of all. Beloved are you of me and steadfast of heart Therefore, I will speak for your good (64) Merge your mind in Mine, be my devotee, sacrifice as worship unto Me, bow to Me (Lord Sri Krishna) so, you shall reach Me You are dear to Me I declare the ‘ truth ’ to you (65) ”—

What is the universal ‘ truth ’ propounded here ? The ‘ truth ’ is that Bhagawan Sri Krishna himself is the universal God. He, alone, is the God manifesting himself in the form of a man It is the “ Truth ”.

The Taittiriya Upanisad (2-1-1) says—सत्य ज्ञानमनन्त ब्रह्म. (1) The true knowledge means—(2) To become the endless Brahma—“ मद्याजी भव ” means आत्मनिवेदनम् “ That is the last (ninth) stage of ‘ Bhakti ’ i.e. Devotion. According to नारदभक्तिसूत्र this is the complete devotion with self-sacrifice unto God This is expected by Bhagawan Sri Krishna, not only from Arjuna, but from everybody, not only in the past but for ever, everywhere in the universe He, who will do this, shall get the fruit.

HOW TO ACT ?

Now, these are the questions before us :—

1. How man can be happy and satisfied ?
2. To whom should he devote his life ?
3. Whether or not he should work for his livelihood ?
4. Whether or not he should continue his previous religious duties ?

The answer by Bhagawan Sri Krishna is—

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेक शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपाप्येभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुच ॥ १८-६६ ॥

1. Leave all such other duties which were considered as yours before
2. Bring your complete devotion to me (Sri Krishna).
3. Nothing remains yours, even yourself are not yours, Then what of other things ?

4. You and your everything becomes mine; therefore, naturally all your responsibilities are mine I shall look after you and solve all difficulties in your way.

5. I release you from all evil deeds (पापकर्माणि) and even from the effects of last sins.

6. I bring attainment of what you have not and security in what you have (योगक्षेम वहाम्यहम्).

Here lies the 'secret wisdom'. Sri Krishna demands complete surrender and to him alone and not to any 'Prophet' or 'son of God' or to any other deity or 'National Gods'. Bhagawan Sri Krishna declares himself to be the God of the universe and not of any particular race or sect nor of any particular religion. He loves all beings equally—impartially. He bestows happiness and satisfaction on all those, who devote themselves to Him.

All the *Great Men* in the world served for the welfare of mankind but unlike Bhagawan Sri Krishna no one could guarantee livelihood to their devotees. Not a single devotee was ever deceived. Many people outside India are oblivious of the Vedic concept of 'Incarnation' of the God. No one could declare himself till now (before and after Sri Krishna) to be the universal God. Sri Rama even had not called himself God. But Sri Krishna is the only person, who bore himself, behaved and died like a man, but he was undoubtedly the supreme power and knowing all the responsibility, he declared in the Gita that he is the 'Universal God'. *This is the secret.*

In Chapter X 'He' first referred to 'Divine Glories' in general terms. Arjuna was not satisfied. So he (Sri Krishna) exhibited his 'Universal-form' before him, giving him (Arjuna) the supernatural eye (Ch. XI) At the very moment Arjuna's doubts were dispelled and he at once accepted Sri Krishna as 'the Universal God'

Taking help of the quotations from the old scriptures of Vedas and appealing to Arjuna's intellect and reason Sri Krishna proved that he himself can be and is the universal God. At the end of the 'Gita' we find that Arjuna accepted that, Bhagawan Sri Krishna is the only universal God and everybody should be devoted only to Him, so that men can get happiness and satisfaction through Him alone

Arjuna obeyed Bhagawan and got success in his life. The remedy is disclosed here in the 66th verse of Ch 18. Therefore, it is chosen by me purposely as the most important one from the 'Gita'

Necessity of Propaganda

Some prejudiced souls think and try to make others believe like themselves that the Hindu religion is a national religion and hence incapable of spreading in the world at large. Some interested foreigners join hands and try to argue that, it is not a 'missionary religion'. Both of them are intentionally creating confusion by making a false propaganda. "कृण्वन्तो विग्वमार्यम्" is the declared Mandate of the Vedas. Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita enjoins upon his devotees preaching this "secret wisdom" (Ch 18 V 67 to 71) and carrying the same to the farthest limits of the entire universe.

Lord Sri Krishna is present every where and is always in the hearts of his devotees. To get relief from our sins and from the effects of the past sins, we must seek refuge at the feet of Sri Krishna. This has to be preached and spread all over the world to achieve happiness and satisfaction in this life, and salvation after death. Preachers or Missionaries should be encouraged to preach to the world or the devotees themselves should take that task on their shoulders as they can derive happiness by preaching the message of the Gita, devotion to Lord Sri Krishna, throughout the world.

When Lord Sri Krishna was living there were very few souls who 'knew' him to be universal God. Uddhava (उद्धव) and Arjuna were amongst them. Arjuna died soon after Sri Krishna's departure. But "Uddhava" carried his message throughout the world. Krishna Dwaipayana Veda Vyas (कृष्णद्वैपायन वेदव्यास) was the great Propagandist after the departure of the Bhagawan. "Srimat Bhagavata" (श्रीमद् भगवद् गीता) is written by him specially for the manifestation of the life and work (लीला) and the intention of the incarnation of the God. Readers would do well to remember that the same 'Vyasa' is the author of the 'Gita' also.

Friends ! Today, we all find ourselves burdened with all kinds of unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Injustice and untruth are the order of the day. The whole world is knee deep in doubts and delusions. Hatred is writ large everywhere. The only remedy for us to be happy and satisfied individually and collectively is that the common people must accept and preach the message of Bhagawan Sri Krishna.

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेक शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ॥

The Gita Mandal desires me to write a short article on "Which verse of the Bhagawadgita has influenced me most". It must be stated at the outset that I have implicit faith in the Philosophy of Mysticism of Gurudev Dr. R. D. Ranade. For me, that philosophy is a way of life and not mere intellectual accomplishment. My reflections on the subject under consideration will, therefore, naturally reflect his philosophy and point to the ideal, which he has placed before man as his highest goal.

Gurudev Ranade teaches that realisation of God is the highest goal, which man must try to achieve and also explained at considerable length the pathway to God or the Sadhana for attaining realisation. The attitude of surrender or Sharanagati is the highest step of the ladder of this Sadhana or devotion. As an aspirant or Sadhaka, therefore, the verse quoted above has the greatest importance for me. Surrender is not only the highest point of devotion but also pervades the whole life of an aspirant. The process of the Sadhana of devotion involves gradual surrender, culminating in the highest attitude of complete resignation to the Will of God. "Thy will be done" says the perfect devotee. Let us analyse the conception of surrender, see how it is related to the development of devotion and to the final achievement of God realisation.

God-realisation or self-realisation involves the “ whole¹ ethical and mystical process by which the allurements of the not Self, naturally ingrained in man, are to be gradually weaned out and the Self to be made to stand in its native purity and grandeur ” says Gurudev Ranade. Now surrender or Sharanagati implies submitting to the will of another person, after resigning one’s own will. In spiritual surrender, a man’s lower self surrenders to the dictates of his higher self. The BG. tells us “ The Self² is its own enemy; the Self is its own friend ”. The hostile or the lower self identifies itself with the gross and the subtle body and is hence addicted to all the allurements of the not-self, namely physical pleasures, fame, wealth etc. It is engrossed in the three qualities, Trigunas, and is grieved at the thought of losing them. To forego physical pleasures or intellectual happiness is, to it, a great sacrifice, which it will never agree to, of its own free will. When, however, spiritual wisdom and discrimination dawn on man, and his higher and friendly self is awakened and vitalised, it is able to assert its will and persuade the lower self to give up its suicidal addiction to the gross and subtle body. That is the beginning of surrender. The next step is ethical surrender, which consists of discarding vices in mind and body, which is the natural result of the awakening of discrimination. When a man understands clearly the difference between good and bad, wholesome and ruinous, he gradually discards the latter and turns to the former. If discrimination does not result in this mental and physical change, it is evidently very superficial and can hardly be called discrimination. This avoidance of vices and cultivation of moral virtues constitutes the moral preparation of the spiritual aspirant and involves surrender on the part of the lower self. For, at each stage, it resists the advice and orders of the higher self to give up its bad thoughts and actions and to cultivate virtues. It is a sacrifice to which it has ultimately to submit, under the compelling force of the superior will of the higher self. Both the Selves are, of course, ultimately one and finally merge in God.

The changed intellectual and moral attitude, however, means only very partial surrender or sacrifice. The process of all-out

1 U. P. 302

2 B G VI—5

S. G. . 19

resignation begins when the mystical process of Sadhana starts and must culminate in complete "Self-surrender,"³ which philosophically interpreted, means identification with God " and that is the end of all mystical endeavour. The aspirant must attain Godhood or Unison with Brahman, as result of God-realisation, must experience the great truths, " I am Brahman " and " All is Brahman and I am All ". It is only after God-realisation that an aspirant truly achieves these experiences and reaches the Highest State, which is final beatitude or Sayujya Mukti. " The Mystic⁴ teach us that such a rising devotee must ultimately feel his identity with his own self. It is only then that there is perfect unison ". It is not possible here to go into the full details of spiritual experiences. So, we shall just refer to the vision of the Self before a mystic's eye " The luminous⁵ reality which comes out of us in the ecstatic state of consciousness and appears to our vision in our own form is Atma (Mai. 24 II. 2) ". " The Saint⁶ sees himself, as reflected in the mirror of his own heart. When we are able to see the reflection of ourselves in the mirror of our own heart, we can be said to have approximated to the God-hood ". With this experience, the difference between the devotee and God disappears. The same experience is referred to by Patanjali in Yoga-Sutra I. 3. " In that state, the seer lives in his own form " and by the Bhagawadgita in VI-20, " where the self sees the self and is satisfied within itself ". The aspirant reaches this highest stage, very gradually, as a result of long, sustained, persistent spiritual Sadhana, carried on with one-pointed devotion (Bhagawadgita VI-45)

How is this gradual attainment connected with growing surrender ? As already seen, the lower self is addicted to the allurements of the not-self, for the sake of brevity, they may be referred to as the three qualities or Trigunas. The Bhagawadgita tells us that everything is under the influence of Trigunas, and is permeated by them only God transcends them (18-40) and so exhorts us that we should transcend the three qualities and attain

3 B G G R, p 66

4 B G G R, p. 70

5 B G G R, p 270

6 P H 387

Nistraigunya (II-45) that is God. Man has to purge himself of all attachment to qualities and devote himself to God. That is the only way to realise God. "Let your mind think of me only, be devoted to me, worship me and make me your only goal. Thus you will reach me" (Bhagawadgita IX-34). "By one-pointed devotion alone will you be able to know me, see me and enter me" (Bhagawadgita II-54). "Place your mind and intellect in me; thereafter you will ever abide in me" (Bhagawadgita XII-8). "Only he, who serves me with unswerving devotion will be fit to become Brahman, by transcending the Gunas." (Bhagawadgita XIV-26). Similar quotations can be multiplied but that is unnecessary. Man is what he thinks. He is enslaved by the three qualities, when he thinks of them only; and starts on the way to attain God, when he thinks of God. The longing and urge for happiness is innate in human nature; it can never be rooted out. He can only change the objects of pleasure and happiness. There is physical pleasure, intellectual happiness, aesthetic enjoyment and moral satisfaction, in the sphere of the Trigunas and man must surrender himself to one or more of these, for the satisfaction of his innate urge for happiness, he can only choose his master. But in his infatuation and ignorance, he never feels this slavery to Trigunas and is, on the contrary, proud of it; though a slave, he thinks he is the master. This blindness is more marked in the case of attachment to Sattvika objects, though ultimately, they are only golden fetters, according to Dnyaneshwar or in modern parlance, he is first an A class prisoner. He will be free and achieve the highest goal of his life, namely God-realisation, only when he discards all these allurements and surrenders himself to God alone. Then he will be able to enjoy beatific bliss or Atmanand and need no more then turn to Trigunas. This sacrifice and abandonment of Trigunas must be absolute and complete; otherwise, devotion will not be one-pointed and unswerving. If the mind is attached to some worldly desires, its devotion to God will be divided and swerving, which will never lead him to his ideal. In a large number of verses the Bhagawadgita has laid stress on the necessity of one-pointed, unswerving devotion, on the mind being centred in God only, on dedicating all actions, the mind and the intellect to God, on becoming the mere instrument in the hands

of God. All these amount to the exhortation to complete self-surrender or Sharanagati. There is no duty higher than self-surrender. All duties, social, political, religious, may be abandoned, man's only duty is supreme self-surrender.

“The Bhagawadgita⁷ teaches not a performance of social duties but the abandonment of all standards of duty (sarva-dharman) to take refuge in the Supreme alone, not social service but the action of the God-possessed, as a sacrifice to Him, who stands behind man and nature, (Sri Arobindo, Essays on the B. G. p. 43) thus rising to the great finale of supreme Self-surrender to the Master of Existence (Ibid Second series p. 1-2)”. The surrender must be complete and absolute “As gold into gold⁸ or as wave into the ocean, similarly be thou submissive to me To say that the devotee has submitted to me and still has retained a separate individuality of his own, is utter folly (Dyan. 18-1400-02)”.

We shall now consider, in some detail, the Sadhana, advocated by the Bhagawadgita to achieve this surrender. A man will not succeed in surrendering himself to God only by intellectual or psychological methods. The attitude of Sharanagati is created by God-realisation only and is proportionate to realisation. So, mystical meditation is the Sadhana for surrender also; meditation by means of the name of God or Nama-smarana is the Sadhana ‘Thought, word and deed’ is the rule of life. “Mental impulse⁹ has its origin in mind and then it comes over to speech or sight or the motor organs (Dyan 13-298)” So when transformation of entire life is desired, the beginning must be made with the mind. Bhagawadgita II/62-63 graphically describe the utter ruin, brought about gradually by contemplation of the objects of senses. The aspirant has to snap the first link of this disastrous chain—Vishaya-Dhyana—by substituting meditation on God, that is on God's name. As already seen above, everything except God is a Visaya or a Guna. So, one must meditate on God alone and on nothing else. Here, mystical meditation begins. Its ethical and mystical implications are beautifully described in Dnyan¹⁰

7. B. G. G. R., p. 163

8. M. M. 74

9. M. M. 74

10. M. M. 115

12/104-109. "If you cannot deliver your heart to God immediately, then think of God at least for a moment during the day. Then every moment that you spend in the enjoyment of My happiness will take your mind away from sense. Thus, as your heart will go out of the objects of sense and begin to enter into the Being of God, it will gradually end by becoming God." The most important point to be noted here is the element of bliss or Ananda, resulting from meditation. An aspirant, who practises Nama-Smarana, is the recipient of spiritual experiences of divine light, forms, colours unstruck sound, mellifluous juice etc. All these are manifestations of God. As God is bliss or Ananda, these experiences are blissful and so the devotee is more and more attracted towards them. His meditation on the Nama is strengthened or vitalised by simultaneous contemplation of these blissful visions and sounds—Swarupa—Anusandhana and Nadasandhana—and in that bliss, when it mounts in intensity and volume, body-consciousness is lost. How, then, will there remain even a trace of the three qualities or the five elements? Merged in this bliss, the devotee becomes desireless and so sinless. The aspirant is absolutely free from the thralldom to them, has surrendered himself to God completely, by being lost in Divine bliss, which is tantamount to Identification with God. "Bhagawadgita"¹¹ VI 28 says that a Yogi who practises Yoga continuously for a long time enjoys great happiness after touching God, coming into direct contact with Him and in communion with Him; that is the bliss of spiritual experience referred to above. According to Bhagawadgita V 24, a man reaches the state of Nirvana or highest bliss after having enjoyed the highest bliss inside and become one with the Brahman. Finally, according to Bhagawadgita V/20-27 enjoyment of ecstatic bliss within ourselves is the same thing as becoming one with Brahman. The bliss which the saint enjoys is the same thing as Brahman." This is the spiritual height which the Bhagawadgita exhorts a man to reach, through the process of meditation and surrender, gradually culminating in absolute union with God.

Meditation, surrender, devotion involve a double process; attachment to God and detachment from everything that is not

11. B. G. G. R., p. 224

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11. B. G. G. R., p. 224

self, permeated by the three qualities. Man is deeply addicted to objects of senses and so meditation is difficult and requires great effort. Detachment from Samsara is painful; so an aspirant must diligently develop an attitude of sacrifice, resignation, surrender, without which devotional meditation cannot be carried on with some success, in the initial stages. Supreme faith in the omnipotence and benevolence of God will be of great help in confirming this attitude. Then, as the devotee advances on the path, he will have spiritual experience, the enjoyment of which will make meditation easy and a pleasure. Finally, one-pointed, blissful, unswerving contemplation of God will be his very nature. All ignorance, sin or impurity and grief will come to an end. He will be Illumination, Bliss and Purity incarnate. With this great prize in view, every aspirant should carve on his heart this great message and assurance of Sri Krishna 'Discard all duties and take refuge in me, I shall free you from all sins, grieve not.'

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 Abbreviations explained—(1) B G—Bhagawadgita (2) B G G. R.—The Bhagawat Gita as a philosophy of God--realization by Dr. Ranade (3) P H—Pathway to God in Hindi literature (4) M M—Mysticism in Maharashtra by Dr. R. D. Ranade (5) U. P—A constructive survey of the Upanisadic philosophy

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।  
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६॥

What a question and what a quest ! The book itself is the nectar-like milk drawn by the Divine cowherd from Upanisads turned into cows. It is thus an essence in itself. But we want an essence of the essence—the quintessence, no one will dare to say that the demand is unsound. It rather befits the present times. These are the days of haste. We have no time to waste. We do not possess sufficient time to feed ourselves. Instead of the food-stuffs which are going to be rare and rare we are now in search of tablets, containing all the necessary vitamins, so that it will not take even a second to gulp them down our throats. Our time of meals will thus be saved and we shall be able to use it for other purposes.

The days of Lord Krishna and Arjuna were the days of leisure. Even when the armies of the opposite camps stood facing each other, and when weapons were on the point of clashing, the warrior Arjuna had the time to consider whether preference was to be given to arms or alms and the charioteer Krishna had the leisure to lecture him in so many discourses, on all the philosophical ideas, current in his times, in order to convince him into taking up arms. In the meanwhile, both the armies stood quietly in attention to await the upshot of the conversation between these two great personages. But alas! Those days of complacency no more exist for us. Haste and speed are at present hovering over our heads and we badly feel the want of knowledge of the



most important portions of our scriptures so that instead of spending our time in perusing—say all the chapters of the Bhagavadgita, we may imbibe just a verse or two and derive the benefit of concentrating on them.

The word 'important' pictures before my mind the pleasant days when we had been students. Many of us did not care so much as to what we had to learn, but were more anxious to pass the examination. Naturally we always tried to know the important portions of the books we had to study. Since then, I think, the word 'important' has been of great importance to us. We did not know even the exact import of the word, which with us only meant "likely to be asked in the examination". Now when we have grown pretty old and our minds are bewildered, by being daily stuffed with many a new theory, it behoves us to see whether we can sift our old notions and preserve their essence.

In our ancient phraseology, there was no word like 'important'. But the ancient preceptors did not know that their students did not pay the same attention to all that they said and they had to use a word, when they wished to point out the importance. This word was गुह्य. It did not mean 'mysterious' as is supposed by some. It simply meant fit to be hidden, 'unfit to be exposed'. Naturally what is considered of great importance is not so kept that it can be handled by any one. Just think of money, which is of the greatest importance in these days. We do not so keep it that it can be grabbed by any X Y. Z. Thus गुह्य means important, गुह्यतर more important, and गुह्यतम most important. Let us now examine what is गुह्यतम in गीता.

This work is not a philosophical text-book in which all the topics are well arranged. It is in the form of a talk between Lord Krishna as the preceptor and Arjuna as the disciple. When he lays down aims, Krishna goes on explaining his duty. Arjuna does not however properly understand. Even after hearing Krishna's answer to his question about स्थितप्रज्ञ (a man of secured understanding) Arjuna is bewildered and asks Krishna to speak in unmistakable terms and not to confound him. This occurs at the beginning of the third chapter. Questions and answers go on between the two. Arjuna asks nearly a dozen questions, which are answered by Krishna. But still Arjuna remains unconvinced. Even at the start of the final discourse, he is found

unconvinced and wishes to know separately the basic principle underlying resignation and renunciation.

The preceptor Krishna knew his disciple in and out. He was not only his disciple, but life-long friend, who had been free with him in jest, whilst at play, at rest-time or at meals, whilst alone or in company. It is very difficult to convince such a friend. Seeing the nature of Arjuna's questions Krishna must have known that Arjuna could not and did not understand all that he had said. So like a prudent teacher, he after giving him, more than half a dozen discourses, uses the word गुह्यतम at the commencement of the ninth chapter. In the first eight chapters we do not come across the word गुह्यतम. But the ninth discourse opens with the words इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानम् i.e. "I will now declare to thee the most important knowledge". Arjuna at the beginning of the eleventh chapter acknowledges this knowledge as परम गुह्यम् "very important" and says "तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ( ११-१ ). His delusion has been banished by it. But still he wishes to see the Lord's imperishable form. Krishna then shows him his cosmic form in all its majesty. Arjuna is struck dumb with fear but all his doubts are not set at rest and we find him, at the start of the final chapter, questioning his teacher as mentioned before.

Krishna supplies his explanation at great length and in the end says इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ॥ १८-६३ ॥ "Thus I have expounded to thee, the knowledge, more important than any other one." But even at this stage, Krishna is not sure that Arjuna will not put any more questions. Hence like a fed-up tutor, he tells his disciple to ponder over it fully and then act according to his sweet will. विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ( १८-६३ ). In the heart of his heart, Lord Krishna, the friend of his namesake, is not sure that Arjuna will act in the right direction. He therefore, as though, withdraws the freedom just given to his friend and coaxingly tells him सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ( १८-६४ ) "Hear, anew, my supreme word, *the most important of all*" He also states his reason for it. It is "इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति" ॥ १८-६४ ॥ "because thou art dearly beloved of me."

Now let us see what this supreme word, most important of all, is. It is in the first instance मन्मना भव भद्भक्तो मद्याजी मा

नमस्कुरु ( ९-३४ ) “ On me fix thy mind, to me bring thy devotion, to me offer thy sacrifice and to me make thy obeisance.” Thus only can man go to Him. In order to make his assertion very strong He says सत्य ते प्रतिजाने ( १८-६५ ) “ Solemn is my promise to thee ” Finally in order to allay all his doubts and fears, Lord Krishna says

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

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‘ Abandon all duties and come to me, the only refuge I will release thee from all sins. Grieve not ’ This is the *most important solemn word of God unto man* It is universal and is found embedded in the scripture of Islam, the Kuran, wherein ( 2 112, 10 63 ) it is clearly said “But whoever surrender their purpose to Allah, while doing good their reward is with their Lord and no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they grieve.” In spite of the identical phraseology, there is no borrowing.

In ancient days knowledge was not showered at random, but was imparted with a definite aim. Lot of attention was paid as to the recipient and care was particularly taken that what was given, would not be thrown away. Krishna knew that this last important piece of advice, told to Arjuna, would free him from all his doubts and this is justified by Arjuna's statements नष्टो मोहः “ destroyed is the delusion ” and स्थितोऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ( १८-७३ ) “ now do I stand secure, my doubts dispelled, and I will act as you say.” But at the same time Krishna also knew that this advice could not be based merely on reason It required faith and without this faith, it was likely to be misused. This is why he warns Arjuna, never to utter it either to him who has no devotion or to him who scoffs at the Lord. This supremely important knowledge is only to be told to His Devotees and this must be borne in mind

So according to Krishna, the expounder of the Gita, the most important thing is to abandon all and go to Him with the faith that He will release the faithful from all sins.

यत. प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ १८-४६ ॥

I am asked to write a small article on the verse in the Bhagawadgita, which I like best. The Verse from that sacred book quoted above, is my definite choice. Sir Edwin Arnold translates this verse as under. "He from whom all beings arise and by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping him through performance of his own duties man attains perfection." The word 'Bhagwadgita' will be referred to as 'BG' for the sake of brevity as the word is likely to occur many times hereafter in this essay.

I will at the outset deal with the background of BG. Knowledge of that background is absolutely necessary for the proper appreciation and understanding of the sublime message conveyed by this work. It is just likely that some of the readers of this article as well as of other articles in this book may not be knowing that appalling previous history and hence I intend to make a brief reference to it just at the beginning.

King Duryodhana of the Kaurava dynasty had managed by means fair and foul, to send Pandavas, his cousin brothers, in exile for a full period of thirteen years and during their absence he had usurped their kingdom.

When the Pandavas returned they demanded back their territory from the Kauravas. They tried their utmost for a compromise and with the pious wish of avoiding the blood-

shed and carnage of soldiers on either side they lessened their just demand to such a low level that they showed their willingness of being satisfied even with five villages out of their vast realm. Duryodhana was, however, adamant. He spurned the negotiations and flatly refused to part with an inch of their land and bluntly stated that he would not give the Pandavas even so much land as would be necessary to cover the sharp end of a needle.

When the negotiations thus failed, the only alternative course left to the Pandavas was fighting for the emancipation of their birth-land.

Preparations of war were made by both the sides. The two armies stood on the battle-field facing each other and were eagerly waiting for the command to open the onslaught.

At this crucial moment Arjuna who himself was one of the Pandava brothers and who was the chief Hero on their side, told Sri Krishna who had voluntarily undertaken the duty of running Arjuna's chariot to take it between the two armies. Arjuna wanted to survey the situation and to have a look at the usurpers of his kingdom and their partisans and supporters; Sri Krishna drove the chariot to the fore-front as desired by Arjuna and stopped it between the two fighting forces.

The sight of the enemy ought to have made the blood of Arjuna boil with wrath and anger. Strangely enough, it had just the opposite effect. Arjuna's mind got engrossed in the results of the war. He thought that the Kaurava army which consisted of his own kith and kin, of his relatives, well-wishers, friends, grandsons and teachers would be completely wiped out during the course of the war. Their widows alone would be left behind. Hence performance of caste and family duties, offerings of oblations to the departed fore-fathers and observance of similar religious rites would be an impossibility as no male person on the side of Kauravas would be left behind at the close of the war. Women would be polluted. Mixture of caste would step in and वर्णसंकर would spread, unrighteousness and immorality would be rampant and the whole blame and sin of this horrible and colossal calamity would fall on his head.

These and similar thoughts of the dreadful results of war

overpowered Arjuna's mind. He could not stand the situation. He threw away his bow, quiver and arrows and turned back to the hind seat of his chariot.

Arjuna then told Sri Krishna that he would not fight even if the sovereignty of the three worlds were offered to him

Sri Krishna admonished him in very severe and cutting language. The strong admonition had some salutary effect on the mind of Arjuna. He gave up his former firm stand of "no fight on any account" and requested Sri Krishna to guide him properly and to tell him whether he should start fighting which would end in the dire consequences referred to by him previously or whether he should give up fighting which would allow the usurpers of his kingdom to enjoy the fruits of their evil deeds, unpunished and unrepentant. Arjuna further stated that his mind was confused and he could not decide what course he should follow; he sought the advice of Sri Krishna for the solution of the dilemma before him. The advice given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna at that time forms the theme of the Bhagawadgita.

Sri Krishna was held in very high reverence and was considered to be the full incarnation of God even in his own times; He in His Divine mood delivered that celestial message for the benefit of Arjuna as well as for the welfare of the whole mankind.

Thousands and thousands of people, Easterners as well as Westerners, have got inspiration and have found solace from this gospel of world religions. This is a message of three H's—Head, Heart and Hand : Gospel of wisdom for the head, gospel of emotion for the heart and gospel of action for the hands

In his preface to the English edition of Bhagawadgita by Sir Charles Wilkinson, Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India, declared with reference to Bhagawadgita that the writers of Indian Philosophy will survive when the British dominion in India should have long ceased to have existence and when sources of yielding wealth and power were reduced to memory. We actually find now that the prophetic words of Warren Hastings have come out to be true. The British Rule in India is entirely gone but the hold of Bhagawadgita on the

minds of people still continues as before. Such is the background and glory of Bhagawadgita.

I now turn to the verse selected for this article. It points out a practical way to reach perfection.

Let me first deal with the second line of the verse: That line together with its translation is quoted below for ready reference :

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ।

( By worshipping him through the performance of his own duties, man attains perfection, )

This line contains four words of very great importance and special significance . The words are : सिद्धि ( Perfection ), मानव ( man ), स्वकर्मणा ( by performance of one's own duty ) and अभ्यर्च्य ( by worshipping ) The first word is सिद्धि ( Perfection ) Perfection is the common service and usual urge of us all No one wants to remain imperfect The state of faultlessness and excellence is the natural aspiration of men And as stated above the selected verse shows us the path of perfection

The second word is मानव ( man ) The word has no prefix or suffix attached to it It has no qualifications and limitations and hence rich and poor, rulers and the ruled, aged and young, teachers and students, masters and servants, the Hindus, the Christians and the Mohamedans, the Whites, the Yellows and the Blacks, men and women, each one and every one of them without any distinction of caste, colour, creed and country are included in this small word मानव and any one of them can obtain perfection if he so desires and tries for it.

We now come to the remaining two words स्वकर्मणा ( by the performance of one's own duty ) and अभ्यर्च्य ( by worshipping ).

For gaining perfection we have to perform our own duty in such a way that it will amount to worship This worship is solely dependent on स्वकर्म ( performance of one's duty ) alone. It is not necessary for this worship to collect materials such as flowers, camphor, sandal-wood-paste, incense etc. It is not necessary to undertake a pilgrimage to sacred places such as Makka, Varanasi ( Banaras ), Jerusalem etc It is not also necessary to read holy books such as the Vedas, the Kuran, the Bible etc. All these have their own intrinsic merits and importance. All of

them are very useful in their own way but none of them is absolutely essential in the type of worship considered in this verse. The worship is wholly and solely dependent on स्वकर्म (performance of one's own duty). Therefore a man desirous of getting perfection should stick to his own duty and perform it as worship of God.

The word स्वकर्मणा (by one's own duty) is of special significance. This duty may be ugly and detested and despised by others. Supposing that I am born in a butcher's family and have to maintain myself by killing animals. This slaughter is condemned by many. Even then I must stick up to it and should not give it up for a better job involving a different duty. Bhagawadgita has the utmost regard for स्वधर्म of a man. In verse No. 35, Chapter 3 The Lord has decreed .

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३-३६ ॥

( Better is one's own duty though devoid of merit than the duty of another well-discharged. Better is death in one's own duty, the duty of another is fraught with fear. )

The words used in this verse are very emphatic. They are also very definite. They make a clear distinction between one's own duty and duty of another. A man is asked to perform his own duty however devoid of merit it may be, at the cost of his own life. He is expected even to face death in the performance of his own duty. Importance of one's own duty is further emphasised by the next statement that another's duty though easy and honourable to discharge should never be aspired by anyone, as adoption of another's duty is always fraught with fear and dire results.

Swami Vivekananda, our patriotic saint of world renown, has also stated "Devotion to one's duty is the highest form of worship to God." So much regarding स्वकर्मणा and now I turn my attention to the word अभ्यर्च्य. There are various forms and types of worship. There are also various stages of it. The worship which is referred to in this verse and which we are now considering is the ordinary worship of an average man, a common householder, who has to toil for his livelihood and who believes that if God is pleased with his worship or



अभ्यर्चना, he will surely be able to lead a life of peace and happiness, free from anxiety and care. As proper discharge of duty amounts to worship in this case, the performance of our duty in whatever manner we like, will not do. The duty must be performed in such a way that it will serve the purpose of worship. Whatever is necessary in worship, is absolutely essential in the discharge of our duty. Whatever is repugnant to worship, will have to be scrupulously avoided by us.

Supposing, we want to worship the idol of Vithoba in the temple of Pandharpur. We will first take bath; a bath of course has its own advantages, but the custom of taking bath at the beginning of worship has arisen out of the notion that God likes cleanliness and if we approach him uncleaned and dirty, He will not like it. After going near the idol of Vithoba, we bow before Him and prostrate ourselves at His feet. The root cause of this custom lies in our supposition that God likes humility in his devotee.

At the time of worship we try to keep our mind free from evil and sinful intentions and ideas. We also wish that pious and holy thoughts should occupy their place. This is necessary because it is our firm belief that God is very much pleased with virtues and is equally displeased with vices. In short, whatever pleases God we do and whatever displeases Him we avoid, because our hope lies in securing His favour. We should therefore with a firm mind try to cultivate virtues such as truth, humanity, humility, purity, self-control, forgiveness, uprightness, harmlessness, peacefulness, gentleness etc. We should likewise with equal firmness try to control our mind and free it from vices such as falsehood, lust, anger, crookedness, covetousness, hatred, egoism etc. Some of the main virtues and vices are enunciated above. We should have to take utmost care to see that the discharge of our own duty is characterised by the presence and observance of virtues and absence and avoidance of vices as the former please God and the latter displease Him, and God's pleasure, should be the whole and sole goal of a worshipper. Duty so performed is tantamount to God's worship which is sure to lead us to perfection.

So far I have dealt with the 2nd line of the selected verse. Now let me deal with the first line. That line with its English

translation is quoted at the top. It is again quoted here for ready reference :

यत्. प्रवृत्तिर्भूताना येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

( He from who all Beings arise and by whom all this is pervaded ).

When a man worships God he certainly entertains some vague or definite idea about His divine nature. The first line of the verse deals with two Powers of it. It tells us that God is our creator and all this is pervaded by Him.

In this line there are two words भूतानाम् ( of Beings ) and सर्वम् ( all ) which require our special attention. As regards the power of God regarding creation, the word used is भूतानाम् ( of Beings ). God is therefore not only the creator of men but He is also the creator of beasts roaming in jungles, of birds flying in the air and of fish swimming in water. God is our creator and we all are His children. This relationship is vividly described in the first line of stanza no. 17 of Ch. IX of Bhagawadgita. That line together with its translation is given below :

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामह. ॥ ९-१७ ॥

( I am the father of this world, the mother, the supporter and the grand sire. )

God is thus our father and mother and we all are His children, brothers and sisters of each one and every one of us among ourselves.

As regards the next power of God's Divine nature the first line says that all this is pervaded by Him. The word used in this connection is सर्वम् ( all ). That word included not only animate objects such as human beings, beasts, birds and fish etc. but it includes inanimate objects also such as trees and stones etc. The second line of verse 42 of Ch. X of Bhagawadgita makes this meaning still clearer. That line runs as under :—

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकाशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ १०-४२ ॥

( I exist supporting this whole world by one part of myself ).

This line clearly shows that all this is not only pervaded by God but it is also supported by Him and that only one part of His is quite sufficient for this purpose. The notion of fatherhood of God brings my neighbour near to me as we both are brothers,

being children of God God's omnipresence (His power to me as God) dwells in the hearts of both of us. Therefore myself and my neighbour should look upon each other as one entity. There should be no idea of separation between us two. We should always try to perceive unity in diversity. The doctrine of Ahimsa (no injury) so ably preached by Lord Buddha in ancient times and by great men like Mahatma Gandhi in recent years gets strong support from this theory of oneness. If my neighbour and I are one, it will never be proper for me to injure him nor will it be fitting on his part to harm me. This doctrine of non-violence based on the theory of the omnipresence of God is also dealt with in verse no 28 of Ch. 13 of Bhagawadgita :

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ १३-२८ ॥

( As he sees the Lord present every where he does not injure self by self and thus he attains to the supreme goal )

This verse conveys that a man should not use his self to injure the self of some one else. God is present in him as well as in the other person. Both are part and parcel of one and the same God. And to injure another is to injure our own selves.

There is also one verse in the Hymn " Bhaja Govindam " composed by Srīmat Shankaracharya which says that we should not even be angry with another as the indweller in us both is one and the same Lord. The verse with its able comments by C. Rajagopalachariar is given below :—

त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णुः

व्यर्थं कुप्यसि मय्यसहिष्णुः ।

( In you, in me and elsewhere is but one and the same Lord , with whom then do you get angry ? Is not every living creature a temple of God ? Does not the same soul dwell in your body and that of your neighbour you fight against? )

These two verses dealing with non-injury ( अहिंसा ) are specially quoted here because non-injury plays a great passive part in the discharge of our daily duty.

We should constantly remember the two Divine powers of the Lord ( His creatorship and His omnipresence ) and regulate our life accordingly. We should love our neighbour as our brother

and should not cause any harm to him. Such discharge of our duty automatically amounts to the worship of God, and such worship is sure to lead us to perfection. The Lord has, in this selected verse, proclaimed to the world that those who want perfection should travel by the path mentioned in the verse. If they do so, they will surely reach their desired destination.

The promise is given to the whole world and is not confined to a particular section of it alone. If the Rulers of the War-minded and Dollar-minded countries follow the path and encourage their people to do so, then they too will be benefitted and will be blessed with perfection with the result that the weapons of war and Hydrogen Bombs will be sent to the watery grave or will be kept in museums as objects of curiosity; War-slogans will yield to songs of love and brotherhood, boundary disputes between neighbouring countries will automatically cease as none will covet another's land. These and similar boons will be showered on the world and there will be the birth of Rama Rajya, the heavenly kingdom of peace and tranquility, plenty and prosperity, happiness and love all over the world; will such a golden day ever arise ?

Bhagawadgita mentions a few other ways also for the attainment of perfection. The one which is within the reach of a common man is described in our selected verse and has been dealt with so far. I will now make a short submission to my readers and then will conclude this article

Bhagawadgita contains many verses which are as important as the verse selected for this article and a few of them are even of greater significance. This sacred mine of precious jewels is however located in a very limited area and has a very small size. Hence it can be easily reached by any one who wishes to have the jewels. Bhagawadgita contains only 700 verses. Its language is so simple that even a High School student can read it with ease. The time required for its reading is also extremely short. The writer of this article has memorised this celestial song and he can recite the whole of it in only 70 minutes at the average rate of ten verses per minute. Gita Press, Gorakhpur has published this small sacred book and has kept its price so low that even a beggar on the street can buy it. The price is only ten paise, just the price of a single cup of tea. I make an humble and earnest request to all my readers

that they should always have a copy of Bhagawadgita the *magna charta of world religion* in their pocket. It should be their constant companion. This divine friend will surely give them the best of counsel and guidance whenever they are needed and reverentially sought.

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सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।  
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ २-१८ ॥

The Bhagawadgita, sung by the Lord Himself, is one of the most well-known work in the ancient literature of our land. It has exercised a shaping influence on the lives of all those, who have approached it; though written in the times of yore even today it can give solace to all those who read it. In its brief span of seven hundred verses it teaches everything that was taught in India during those early days. It teaches the paths of action, knowledge and devotion. It unfolds the nature of the Supreme Reality, and its relation to the world at large. It shows how emancipation is possible in this fleeting life of mortal human beings. It throws light upon what is good and bad in the nature of man. All this is there in the Gita and much more can be found out if one wants to give a summary of the work; but besides all this it answers the basic question of Arjuna, and thus serves as a beacon-light, guiding the people, who are enduring a continuous struggle. What is this question ? How is it answered ?

The Bhagawadgita begins with the personal problem of Arjuna. Before the beginning of the great Mahabharata war, when the vast armies of Kauravas and Pandavas are arrayed against each other in combat shape, when conches are blowing and weapons are twinkling and jingling, Arjuna, perhaps out of sheer curiosity, requests Lord Krishna to drive his chariot to the forefront, so that he may have a look at the armies of his opponents.

The Lord leads him, where he wishes and he sees his own friends and relatives and elders, against whom he is to fight. Suddenly questions come to him like waves. Shall he have to fight with those, with whom he lived and played ? Shall he have to hurl his missiles mercilessly to kill those, who fondled him, when he was young ? Shall he win his war, drenched with the blood of those, whom he loves and respects even now ? He is a Ksatriya, a warrior, and it is his duty to fight. Further the war is waged for the acquisition of the kingdom, which has been usurped. Thus it may be said that the cause is just, but is it not selfish ? However just be the cause of war, does it behove Arjuna to kill all these people, for his own interest ? Is the victory worth its while, if it results from a blood-bath of this magnitude ? If the just demands of the Pandavas require a sacrifice of this sort, it is better to let go all this. If he has to kill all those, who are against him, he will not fight even for the kingdom of all the three worlds, let alone the reign of the earth. Arjuna is unable to understand what to do. He is dazed, he is stupefied. Shall he act or shall he not ? To do or not to do is a question. Helplessly he asks his Lord to show him the right way. This is the crux of the problem.

The discussion which starts with this personal problem is raised to an impersonal level. The state of Arjuna's mind represents a conflict of principles in a man's mind. There are moments in the life of a man, when he is confused and when he cannot steer clear of a maze of ideas and arguments which pull him on both the sides. Our philosophers have taught us that all our actions are bound to produce their results, which may be good or bad. One has to be free from the enjoyment of these fruits, if one wants to put a stop to the pangs of this worldly life. A state of total inaction is to be attained, it is the ideal. But what when a man is confused in this way ? Shall he retire to the forest, simply twiddling his thumbs and thinking that he has nothing to do with this good-for-nothing world ? Is it not escapism from this world ? The state of total inaction may be an ideal, but the tragedy of our life is that it is difficult nay, even impossible to transform the ideal into the real, because, so long as we live, a total annihilation of action cannot be achieved. When we breathe, drink water, take food, see things or hear sounds, when we touch or smell, sleep, sit, stand or walk,

we act. One can escape from this world and turn a recluse, but one cannot escape from action. If then action cannot be avoided, can we avoid the result of that action ? If the ideal cannot be transformed into the real, can we go the other way round and raise the real to the level of the ideal ? To this the answer of the Gita is ' Yes '. If we have to act, we should act in such a way that we have not to enjoy or endure consequences. How is it possible ?

It is a matter of common knowledge that all our actions are directed towards the achievement of a particular purpose. We always work, either to gain something which is desirable or to avert something which is not desirable. The happiness or unhappiness of a man depends upon the fulfilment or frustration of that purpose respectively. It is therefore the passionate clinging to the desire, which makes a man happy or otherwise. As the Gita squarely puts it, the attachment leads to desire, desire to wrath, wrath to stupor, stupor to the loss of memory, that again destroys the intelligence and this is followed by the destruction of that man himself. Thus the root of all the evil is this attachment. If that attachment can be removed, our actions will not lead to undesirable consequences. The Gita proclaims that act we must, but we have no right to the fruit, which may or may not be obtained. We should, therefore, do our duty, without looking into the consequences.

It is very easy to say that one should have no attachment for the fruit, but does it not appear impossible ? How can we do anything without any incentive to work ? How can we ask a student, for instance, to appear for an examination, simply as a part of his duty, without entertaining any desire to get through ? If the ideal appears impossible, what should be done to make it possible ? The knowledge of the immortality of soul and all that can help a seeker of truth, but it is meaningless to the common man, who falls and bleeds upon the thorns of life. It is here that the Gita says that we should cultivate and train our mind in such a way that we do not feel the pangs of frustration. We should have an equanimity of mind, an attitude of serenity, towards the gain or loss of our purpose, so that we will not feel elated when we gain, nor will we feel let down when we lose. It is difficult but not impossible.



While dealing with Arjuna's problem, the Lord tells him:—

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैव पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ २-३८ ॥

“ Consider happiness or unhappiness, gain or loss, victory or defeat with equanimity; and then proceed with fighting; thus you will not incur sin ”.

Thus the Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to fight without entertaining any thought of victory or defeat. He should fight, because it is his duty to fight. He should not think that he is fighting for killing his foes or regaining his kingdom. These words of the Lord, spoken before more than two thousand years, have taught Arjuna, as to how he should act. Even now they teach the common man as to how he should act, as he lives and works in this world. It is this universal application of Arjuna's problem and its answer, that makes the Gita the fountain-source of inspiration to all the people, irrespective of the lapse of time.

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समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ २-४८ ॥

### I. Equality : Introduction

From times immemorial and during all aeons of evolution, humanity has been engaged *by nature* in achieving *equality and equanimity* in all respects and by all means. All social, political, religious, racial and similar other activities of man are rooted in the struggle for existence, rather for eternal existence and for *equality and equanimity* and some times even for *equality with God almighty*, leading to the texts 'Aham Brahmasmi' ( I am God : Brihadaranyaka Upanisat 1/4/10) ; 'Tat Tvam Asi' ( You are That : Chandogya Upanishat 6/8/7 ); 'Ayam Atma Brahma' (This Soul itself is God: Mandukya Upanisat Brih. U. p, 2/5/19) and 'Prajnanam Brahma' ( All that knows is God: Aitareya U.p. 5/3). The reason given for equality and equanimity is, thus, perfect; because *as every individual of the creation is God, all must be and are equal*. The same is the meaning and scope of Chapter XI of the Gita ( Vishvarupa Darshana—yoga : The realization of the vision of the universal form of God ), and Gita X/20 'Aham Atma' ( I am the Soul of all Beings ).

As struggle for equality and equanimity is there in every one *by nature, by instinct*, in the very self of beings, it goes without saying that such struggle must be existing even today. Each party preaches *equality and equanimity* and thereby tries to dominate the other, but fails to achieve *equality*; and therefore, " old order

changeth yielding place to new". Is such *crisis* eternal? Will the struggle for *equality and equanimity* have to continue for ever? Is there no means to achieve the *equality and equanimity* contemplated by humanity? Where and why is the struggle failing or may fail in fact? We are sometimes with a resolute mind in the actual battlefield for *equality*, yet we lay down our arms shivering and trembling with fear, affection, agony and illusion (Gita I-30, 47). We invent logic and theories of our own, quite artificial, unnatural, apparently quite correct, still doubtful, deceptive, and absolutely unscientific even to our own minds. And then we lament over our own failure and inaction, not knowing what to do and what not to do. (Gita, I and Chapter II/1.10)

## II. Causes of Failure : Ignorance of Knowledge of Self

Struggle for equality demands a *cause* for equality. *Why should there be any equality at all?* Men are different, their capacities are different, their earnings are different, they have got love for their own children and family, and this love is natural; that is why succession laws have come into existence from times immemorial. Under such circumstances, it is contended, "there is apparently *no reason* whatever for demanding equality, much less for struggling for the same. There is *nothing equal among us*; therefore, *equality is an impossibility*".

Several theories have failed to answer this question and resolve the doubt in the mind of the Society. Students of Natural Science raising this question are even condemned by some fanatics. But condemnation itself is *not an answer* to the doubt. Natural Science demands a scientific answer in these days of Science and Reason.

The question posed does not pertain to any *ism*, but it is rather a *crisis* in the mind of the student of Natural Science (Arjuna), and he may not be able to fight the battle of equality unless he is satisfactorily answered and convinced and all his doubts are resolved (Gita II-7, IV-40, XVIII-73). That is why the *modern Arjuna* has laid down his arms in doubt and lamentation (Gita I-47 : II-9), *in ignorance of his own self and his own duties* (Gita II-7), and not having been led away by any *ism*. His reason of a Natural Scientist is clear and free

from all bondages of *isms* or passion ( Gita XVIII-51. 57).

He is in search of a Natural Scientist ( Bhagavan Sri Krishna ) to whom he may say, " It behoves you to dispel the doubts of mind completely, for none other than Yourself is capable of clearing my doubts " ( Gita VI-39 ) . But some fanatics, iustead of satisfying him, condemn him. The student of Natural Science does not and cannot admit any evasive answer, in spite of all condemnations showered by an *unscientific* mind.

In such a state of mental crisis the *supreme* Science of Nature comes to the rescue of humanity and declares —

*Equality is yoga.* ( Gita II-48 )

In the said Natural Law, the word *yoga* must be correctly understood by the student of science. *Yoga* means, *realization*, *communion*. Following are some of the aspects of the same :—

Bhagavan Patanjali describes *yoga* as *controlling the unstable attention*. ( Yoga-darshan 1-2 ). Supreme Science of Nature also determined the same. ( Gita VI-18, 33-36; II-54-72 )

A student of *unstable mind* cannot be able to stand firm in the battle of equality. He must be resolute, and possess a stable reason. ( Sthitaprajna : Gita II-54-72 )

That is why *equality is yoga* ( or realization of the *stability of mind* ) .

But the mind has to *rest* on some phenomenon : otherwise *mere controlling* of the same is of no use. If one has to control atomic energy, one must have some aim to achieve. The question is : where should the mind be fixed and why ? Natural Science declares :

" When the mind brought under control rests on Soul ( Atma ), then the student is said to be established in *yoga*. " ( Gita - VI-18, 25, 26 )

This is another aspect of *yoga*. Therefore, *yoga* means resting of the mind on the Soul And whenever Natural Science speaks of Soul, it means God only, because God Himself is the Real Soul of all. ( Gita X-20 'Aham atma' ) . The same has been declared by Shruti also : Ayam Atma Brahma : This Soul is God only. ( Mandukya Up 2 · Brih Up 2/5-19 )

Therefore, *Toga* means " resting of the mind on God or Soul ".

Why should the mind rest on God or Soul ? In what way is it relevant to the Law that *equality is yoga* ? What is God or Soul ? The answer of Natural Science is :

“ God or Soul is *sat-chit-ananda* ”.

### Authorities :—

(i) “ Then what is Soul ?

( Atma Tarhi Kah ? )

Ans. : ( The Soul is ) of the Nature of Sat ( Power ),  
Chit ( Knowledge ), and Ananda ( Happiness ).  
( Sachhidananda-swarupah ). ( Tatva Bodha ) .

(ii) “ Twam Sachhidananda-Adwitiyosi ”

“ You are Sut-Chit-Ananda, beyond Dualism ”.

( Ganapati-Upanisat )

(iii) “ Soul is Infinite Happiness ”.

( Gita VI-21 )

It is Sat (Power), ( Gita II-16, IX-19 ) .

It is Knowledge, Chit ( Jnanam ).

( Gita XIII-17 )

Therefore, if our mind which always wanders in search of Power, Knowledge and Happiness, finds the very God or Soul, the Infinite Power, Knowledge and Happiness, evidently one must be satisfied to the full, needing nothing more. ( Gita VI-22 ) Then satisfied in the experience and enjoyment of God or Soul, he will no more usurp the fruits of others; on the other hand, he will relinquish all fruits of his own acts, and all his proprietary rights, in favour of humanity for the achievement of equality and equanimity. That is why *equality is yoga* ( or, *realization of God or Self* ) .

Besides this, there is another reason why *yoga is equality*. By realization of God or Self, one would experience that *his own self is the self of all, or the self of all is his own self*. ( Gita IV-35; VI-29, 30-31 ) and thereby he realizes *self vision every where* ( Gita VI-32 ) He actually feels that his Soul is the Soul of all : the joys and sorrows of others are his own and his own necessities are the necessities of all This realisation of Self leads to *natural equality*. ( Gita VI-32 )

It is not only from the point of view of the *soul*, but it is from the point of view of the *body* too that the student of Science realises *equality*. All this Universe is *one body*, the *body of God*, our own *body*. (Gita II)

Therefore :

“ The person giving is God ;  
 The person taking is God ;  
 The thing given is God ;  
 The very act of giving is God .”  
 ( Geeta IV-24 )

Therefore, just as it makes no difference whether my money lies in my right hand or in my left, in the same way it makes little difference whether my property lies with me or with the other; provided, we realize all as being the organs of the same Universal Body. That is why *equality is yoga* ( or *realisation of universal body* ) (II).

There is also another significance of realisation of the *universal body* (*yoga*), and that significance is that *all the principles of one body apply to the social, economic, political and all other activities of human beings*. Socially, all members of humanity are the organs of one body and therefore, without any discrimination of class or caste, creed or colour, race or religion.

*Economically, just as in our own body each organ works according to its capacity and also takes according to its necessity*, it neither stores nor spends extravagantly, neither any organ is rich nor any one poor, in the same way as *all this universe is one body*, all members of this universe are organs of the same body. *Each to work according to his capacity, each to take according to his necessity. None is poor, none is rich. There is no exploiter and no exploited.* That is why *equality is yoga* ( or *realisation of the one universal body* ).

Politically, all have got *natural and fundamental rights of the said equality* without discrimination of any kind whatever.

Who will put this *law of nature* into practice ? Education of the supreme science of Nature, propagation, experience, and realisation, along with ripe and matured legislation will automatically put this *law of nature* into practice. Added to this, the *law of nature* takes its own course, and any attempt to impede the course

of this *law* will be *unnatural*, and where education and propagation coupled with realisation and experience assist the *natural law*, the *yoga* ( or realisation of *equality* ) is automatically achieved

There is another reason why *yoga* ( i. e. realisation of *God* or *Soul* ) will lead to equality.

Matter, all material forms, and all bodies, are *unequal*, *inequality means matter and matter means inequality*. Our bodies differ, our capacities differ; therefore our work also differs; therefore, the fruits of work born of the acts ( Gita II-51 ) also differ, our *love and affection* towards our relatives, friends and strangers also differ, hence succession laws are enacted, and they also differ.

In such a *world of material differences*, the question is : how can any one claim socialism or equality ? What is the *equal and common phenomenon* in us all, on the basis of which we may ignore these material differences and preach socialism, and put the same into practice ? Do not these material differences war against our theory and practice ? Do we not feel difficulty in the implementation of *equality* ?

People and students of science are justified in asking *why there should be equality* where, every material thing is *unequal* ? *Why not one enjoy one owns fruits of work* ? Why not each one surrender the fruits of his work in favour of his own children to whom he bears natural love and affection ? What is the *equal and common phenomenon* in us all ?

It will be *difficult* for us to achieve equality on the basis of *Materialism*. Because *Materialism* leads us to *material differences inherent in matter*. Hence *Materialism* cannot furnish us any *basis or cause* for equality.

One *Materialist* himself admits the said defects in *Materialism* as follows :

“ The concept of modern *material equality* has superficial basis. Why men should be equal cannot be properly explained by *materialist* thinkers. They derived this concept by the experience of inequalities which in due course ceased the progress and led to destruction and devastation. It is from the negative that the positive formulation i. e. *material equality* originated. Added to this, *spiritual*

thought goes further and says that human beings are externally diverse but *internally the same*, i. e. Atma (soul). Hence *spiritual* equality should accompany material equality. Material equality otherwise known as socialism or communism has their origin in *spiritual* equality—*spiritual* socialism or communism”.

( Vide-*Socialism and Communism & Gita.* p 8 )

No doubt, the learned Author has also tried to understand quite sincerely and freely the scientific nature of God or Soul, though he could not succeed in his efforts, yet his observations and experience of materialism as negating material equality, are perfectly real and a ‘factum valet’.

One may ask “Are not some of us trying to achieve equality on the basis of Materialism ? ”

Certainly some of us are doing so, and in some respects we have also succeeded; yet the *cause* of our attempt and success is *not materialism*, but it is *spiritualism* itself which has pervaded Materialism unconsciously. The very fact that we are trying for *equality* goes to *disprove* our materialism which furnishes us nothing but *unequal* matter; but on the contrary it proves that we also have got Soul, Universal Soul, *which is equality pervading this material universe*. It is for this reason which we do not know, that we are trying for equality, and we also are achieving success to some extent. If we really know, that the *cause* for equality is the *soul pervading us all equally*, we can well be in a position to explain the conformity between our thought and action. But it will be impossible for us to base the Equality on Materialism itself. Therefore, *equality is yoga.* ( Gita II-48 )

Natural Science also has propounded the same law of Nature stating that *materialism cannot be a basis for equality.* ( Gita VII-15 : XVI-8, 9, 18 )

Natural Science, while showing that matter is *unequal* and hence it cannot be the basis for Equality, has also proved that “matter is *devoid of knowledge*” like a *stone and similar other knowledgeless things*, hence there is no reason or science in *contemplating equality* in phenomena having no knowledge at all.

( Asmadivaccha Tadanupapattih-Brahma-sutra II.1 23 ).

Therefore, the law that *yoga is equality* ( Gita II-48 ) relates to *yoga* or realisation of *soul* or God, and not to the realis-



ation of *mere* matter, although realisation of matter also is absolutely essential as being the subject of equality.

The question is : how can we say that Soul or God is *equal* ?

Following authorities of Natural Science prove that *soul is equally* pervading, hence *equality means soul*.

- i. God or Soul is *equal*. ( Gita V-19 )
- ii. Pandits ( i. e. those who have realised Panda, i. e. Soul will have equal vision. ( Gita V-18 )
- iii. All this Universe is knitted in Me ( i e. God or Soul ) equally in the same way as beads in the thread. ( Gita VII-7 )
- iv. Equality is the personification of God. ( Gita X-5 )
- v. God is *equal* to all friends or foes. ( Gita IX-29 )
- vi. God resides *equally* in all beings. ( Gita XIII-27 )
- vii. God sees *equally* every where, and He is *equally* pervading. ( Gita XIII-28 )
- viii. When one experiences *one's own soul as the soul of all and the soul of all as one's own soul*, then one is said to have achieved *yoga* and *equal* vision everywhere ( Gita VI-29 ).
- ix. Therefore , in order to *realise equality*, let not any one *forget the soul* ( Gita XIII-28; VI-5 ). Otherwise his behaviour and conduct with himself ( and with his aim of Equality ) will be as if he is his own enemy ( Gita VI-6 ).

Added to the authorities, it is quite reasonable and scientific to hold that *God or Soul* ( i e. Power, Knowledge and Happiness ) must be *equal* everywhere, as such and in its nature. Conception of inequality in such phenomenon is absurd and impossible ( Brahmasutras II-3-9 ) although inequality is there in the power, knowledge and happiness *induced* by the material bodies from the same all-pervading God or Soul. ( Gita XIII-16 )

The question is : by trying for *equality*, who is trying

for whom, and what is the scientific exposition of such proposition ?

Ans : ( a ) Realisation ( i. e. *yoga* ) of the *soul by the soul* is meaningless. Because *soul is already soul, it is out of place for the soul to realise itself*

( b ) Similarly realization of *matter by matter* is also meaningless. *Matter is already matter*, and it is out of place for matter to realise itself

( c ) It is also out of place for the *soul* to try to realise the *matter*, because Soul is *sat-chit-ananda* ( Power, Knowledge and Happiness ) and hence it is free from want and need. It is all-pervading, pervading matter, being the support of matter in the same way as the screen is the support of all pictures ( Vedanta Panchadashi VI/1 ). It is the *support* of the whole Universe ( Brahmasutras I-31 ) . ( Mundak Upanisat 2-2-5 ) . How can the *support be dependent* on the *supported* ? Besides this, *soul is equal by nature*, hence there is no question of the already *equal soul* trying for *equality*.

( d ) The conclusion irresistible, therefore, is that it is quite in consonance with reason and science to hold that *matter and material bodies* alone are trying for *equality* ( i. e. Soul ) ; because they are devoid of Power, Knowledge and Happiness, hence they *induce* them from Soul; they are *unequal*, therefore, they want to *induce equality* from *soul*

That is why *the material bodies are trying for equality*, in other words, we are trying for the *realisation of Soul* ( i. e. *yoga* ). Therefore *equality is yoga*. ( Gita II/48 )

( i ) The question is . is there any other reason why everybody believing only in *bodies* without knowing the phenomenon of God or Soul, is *feeling* that there should be *equality* ?

( ii ) Natural Science has solved this problem most scientifically, by enunciating the Law of Nature :

“*Equality on the basis of bodies is feasible on account of their pervasion by god or soul in them*”

( Vyapteshcha samanjasum, Brahmasutras III-3-9 ).

( iii ) This may be explained by an illustration . Suppose there are several metal bodies, some are iron, some are silver, some are gold, some are copper and so on . All these bodies are *different* and they have no *equality*.

But suppose all those bodies are *placed in heat*. Then, on account of *pervasion* of heat in those bodies, all bodies become red and glowing *equally* in heat, and thus *they feel equality* among them irrespective of *differences* in their very nature.

In the same way, human beings have got different bodies, internal and external. From the point of view of *bodies* there is *difference* internally and externally. But on account of *pervasion of the equal phenomenon of God* on their own self or soul, all bodies feel the necessity of *equality*.

But just as metal bodies forget that they are *unequal* and that they look equal on account of their pervasion by *heat*, in the same way our bodies forget that they are *unequal* in their very nature, and that the conception of equality is there on account of pervasion by the *equal phenomenon*, God or Soul.

(iv) Each of us has got as many as *five* bodies one within the other, and they are : Solid body ( *Sthula Sharira* ), Subtle body ( *Sukshma Sharira* ), Cause body ( *Karana Sharira* ), Great Cause body ( *Maha Karana Sharira* ), and Root Cause body ( *Mula Karana Sharira* ). Most of us may not know all these bodies. But all of us know the *solid* body which is the outer cover of inner bodies. Some of us may even know the *subtle* body ( *Sukshma Sharira* ). Let us deal with only *two* bodies, *solid* and *subtle*, out of the five bodies and the Soul constituting each being.

(v) Some of us believe in the existence of only *solid* bodies, and we do not know that there are other bodies within that solid body, much less God or Soul pervading all those bodies. Although we do not know God or Soul, yet we may believe in *equality* on the so-called basis of *solid bodies* only, and we may even try for the same.

We contend, "as all of us are made of matter, we should be equal" But we cannot scientifically explain why men should be *equal* in spite of differences in their *solid bodies*, in their very nature and capacities. We cannot explain, because we do not know there the *equal phenomenon* of God or Soul is pervading all solid bodies, and that, therefore, the conception of equality is there even among us, although we have understood only solid bodies. Still, we try to explain equality in admittedly unequal bodies, and thus commit self-contradiction and estoppel ( *Vyaghata Dosa* ). Natural science explains the

correctness of our idea by pointing out "equality on the basis of bodies is conceived on account of pervasion of *equal phenomenon of God or Soul in us all*" (Brahmasutras III-3-9).

(vi) Similarly some of us go further and know even *subtle* bodies pervading the *solid* bodies. We try to negate the first idea by pointing out correctly, that there cannot be any equality on the basis of solid bodies, and that subtle bodies are different from solid bodies. But, sometimes we ourselves do not know the other internal bodies pervading the subtle body and God or Soul, the Equal Phenomenon pervading all bodies. Yet, on the basis of *subtle* bodies we conceive equality. We contend, "just as we (i. e. subtle bodies) have got hunger and happiness, pains and pleasures, desires and hatred, joys and sorrows, in the same way others also have got those defects or necessities." But we also admit that desires, hatred, affections, pride, prejudices, passions and angers are different in all beings internally and externally. That is to say, passion, anger, greed, affection, pride, prejudice, desire, hatred and other defects *differ* among themselves and among all beings, in their very nature, internally among themselves, and externally when compared with others. In this way, while admitting inequalities in the subtle bodies on one hand, yet basing equality on the other, we commit self-contradiction and estoppel. One has natural love and affection for one's own children and family : that is why *succession laws* have come into existence and are prevailing in many parts of the world. They have got also some basis and reason, namely, the basis of *natural differences* among all subtle bodies, and natural love leading to the fact that "blood is thicker than water". Therefore, admittedly, on the basis of *subtle* bodies too, there cannot be any *equality*. *Bodies are different*, whether they are subtle bodies or any kind of bodies whatsoever. Still we feel equality on the basis of *subtle* bodies *without knowing that equality in the bodies is realised on account of pervasion of equal phenomenon of God or soul in them*. (Brahmasutras III-3-9). And still we try to condemn those believing only in the *solid* bodies contending that "There cannot be equality on the basis of *solid* bodies" although this contention itself negates our own logic regarding the *subtle* bodies too.

(vii) Similarly some of us go further to the innermost

bodies, Cause, Great Cause, and Root Cause; and try to base equality on the basis of those bodies, and try to condemn those who could not reach our depths stating that "there cannot be equality on the basis of *outer* bodies".

(viii) Natural Science understands the extent of our depths and points out :

(a) That, as we go deeper and deeper, inner and inner, we approach equality,

But that, equality is impossible on the basis of *bodies*, because matter itself has got *differences and inequalities* in its very nature, being made of three different Gunas : Satvā, Rājas and Tamas ( Gita XIV-5 ), and that the whole world made of matter has *inequalities everywhere*. ( Gita VIII-13 )

(b) That *equality is there, only in the equal phenomenon of God or Soul*. ( Gita V-19, V-18; VII-7; X-5, IX/29, XIII 27; 28; VI-29; XIII-16 Brahmasutras II-3-9, Vedānta Panchadāshi 6/1 )

(c) And that, all *equalities realised by the bodies* are there in them on account of *pervasion of God or Soul*. ( Brahmasutras III-3-9 )

(d) And that is why *equality is yoga* ( or realisation of God or Soul ). ( Gita II-48; V-18 )

All men of free reason, all students of Natural Science, and all lovers of Equality may know how most natural, most scientific and most logical is the exposition of the *natural law of equality* by the supreme science of nature

That is why Natural Science starts with the lesson on *soul* to the student of Natural Science engaged in the theoretical and practical field of *equality* ( Gita II-11-30 )

All philosophies, all religions, all *Isms*, all revolutions and all evolutions preaching and fighting for equality, *have got their origin and root* in the said *natural law of Equality* propounded by the supreme science of nature, whether one may know the same or not. The law of nature works, whether one may know the same or not. The fire burns all, whether one may know the same or not. Some have been consciously marching towards equality, while some unconsciously. For a scientist of Nature, *ignorance of natural law is no excuse* and the march of Natural Science is, though slow yet steadfast and positive, with one step forward, no step backward; and not a reverse march with 'one step forward, two steps backward'.

### III. Causes Of Failure : Selfish Action.

Another cause of failure in the struggle for equality is *selfish* action. This cause relates to the Body, while the first cause related to *soul*. In this connection the student of Science should remember the *eternal laws of nature* as follows :

The first law is :

i. “ *No material body can remain without motion even for a moment, motion is inherent in the very nature and qualities of primordial matter. Therefore all material bodies are bound to be always doing some action or the other always.*” ( Gita III-5 )

ii. “ *Motion is in the very nature of the matter* ” ( Brahmasutras I-1-10 ).

iii. The modern scientist also has put the same law as follows :

“ Motion in the most general sense, conceived as the mode of existence, *the inherent attribute*, of the matter, comprehends all changes and processes occurring in the Universe, from mere change of place right up to thinking ” ( *Dialectics of nature* by Engels, 1954 edition, p. 92 )

In short, the first law is . “Where there is matter it is always in motion. Conversely, where there is motion it is only matter and nothing but matter ”

Therefore, no material body can remain without *action*, even for a while, thus, *it is the duty and nature of material bodies including ourselves to be doing some work or the other.* ( Gita II-47 )

The second law of nature is that :

( a ) *Each action must bear some fruit or the other.* ( Gita II-51  
Mīmāṃsā Darśana I-1, Brahmasutras II-2-38-41 )

( b ) *Provided, it is done perfectly and nicely, and the same is called yoga.* ( Gita II-50 )

“ That is to say,

*Provided .*

1 There is a *basis* ( Adhithanam );

2 There is one *doer* ( Karta );

3 All necessary *implements* have been employed (Karanam);

4 Those implements have been *utilised* ( Chesta );

5 And natural conditions also favour (Daivam). (Gita XVIII-12, 13, 14)

The third law of nature is :

*“ as the fruits are born of action, they are deemed to belong to the doer of the action.*

It is also self-evident. (Gita I-1, 16-13).

The fourth law of nature is : (*capacities of material bodies to do work differ by nature Therefore, each should be given that work which he can do best by nature and everybody must do work which he can do best by nature In doing so one should remember that no work is mean and no work main* Just as each organ of the body does its own work which it can do by nature for the service of the entire body, in the same way every member of Society must do that work which he can do best by nature for the benefit of the entire body of society or universe. (Gita XVIII-45-48)

The result of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th law is : “ As capacities to do work differ, the fruits acquired by persons through such acts also differ; and as the fruits belong to the doer of the work, one will be poor and another will be rich in course of time on accumulation of the fruits Accumulated fruits (say money) will lead to capitalism, then to feudalism, then to monarchy and then to imperialism, with exploitation, corruption, immorality, and all sorts of vices. Just as the body decays and dies when each organ of the same, claims fruits of its own work and accumulates them, in the same way society decays and dies on account of the claim and accumulation of fruits of work ” (Gita XVII-6; XVI-16)

All this occurs on account of ignorance of the fact that *all this universe is one body* with one Universal Soul or God pervading the same. If that be realised, one would relinquish the fruits of one's work in favour of the entire body of the Universe in which one also is included, for their distribution among the organs of the universal body according to *their necessity*

Therefore, the 7th law of nature is .

*“ No one is entitled to claim fruits of his own action, not even to entertain any desire for them (Gita II-47)*

“Possibly this may lead to *inaction*; but one *should not indulge in inaction*, on the contrary one must work and thereby desire to live for hundred years producing fruits for the maintenance of the Universal Body in which one also is included.” (Gita II-47 · Ishavasya Up. 2)

Then the question arises as to what should happen to all fruits of work so surrendered by every member organ of the Universal Body ? Should they be thrown in an ocean ? Therefore, the eighth law of nature i. “*equality is yoga*”.

i e. “*all those fruits should be equally divided among all organs of the universal body according to their necessity*”. (Gita II-48).

“There may exist two beautifully feathered birds as friends, sitting on the same tree full of fruit. One out of them that eats its own fruits suffers from sorrows, pain and unstaiblity

The other, that surrenders its fruit, is glorious, happy and stable.”

It means that :

“There may exist two societies in this world living in peaceful co-existence and friendship But one out of them, in which each member eats his own fruits without surrendering them in favour of the society, suffers from sorrows, pain and unstability.

The other, in which each member surrenders his fruits in favour of the society for their distribution to all according to their necessity, is glorious, happy and stable.”

(Rig. Veda I-164-20, Mundak Up. 3-1-1,  
Shvetashvatara Up. 4-6)

Therefore *yoga* also means *doing work to the best of one's ability, producing fruits, surrendering them in favour of Humanity, and distribution of them equally among the member organs of the one universal body, according to necessity*. Therefore, *equality is yoga*. (Gita II-48).

#### IV. Conclusion

In these days of Socialism and Science, humanity requires “*the yogashastra i e The science of equality and equanimity*”:



and Shrimat Bhagawadgita has been described as *yogashastra* in each of its Chapter in the beginning and in the end It is the secular philosophy irrespective of class or caste, creed or colour, race or religion, rich or poor

The above *glimpses* of Gita show how the Gita, the secular Socialist Philosophy, could produce *secular men* like Tilak, Gandhi, Nehru, and *all leaders* in India and elsewhere, founding a *secular* constitution and engaged in the constant creation of a perfect Socialist Society.

Therefore, "*equality is yoga*".

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।  
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ॥

The supreme aim of every human being is to attain God-realisation. Swami Vivekananda says, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control or philosophy—by one or more or all of these and be free."

But the majority of human beings is so much attached to worldly life and engrossed in satisfying its senses through the enjoyment of various objects that it has neither time nor inclination to think of God, much less of God-realisation. Man has become too materialistic in outlook and unfortunately has completely lost sight of his divine aspect (his spirituality). The Vedanta says, "The goal of life is spiritual realisation, the fullest manifestation of the divine within, in life and conduct. Food and clothing, shelter and security, power and knowledge, politics and society are not ends in themselves. They are but the means for the fullest development of man, the complete manifestation of the perfection already in him which is the end."

The exhortation of Jesus Christ expresses this idea and this hope, "Be ye therefore perfect even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Very few make the supreme effort to reach the aim. Bhagawan says :—

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मा वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ७-३॥

‘Of thousands of men some rare soul strives to realise Me; of those striving Yogis again some rare one (devoting himself exclusively to Me) knows me in reality.’

The achievement of that aim is very difficult and a man has to pass through several births before he attains it. This is referred to in several places in the Bhagawadgita.

बहूना जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मा प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः । ७-१९ ॥

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी सशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परा गतिम् ॥ ६-४५ ॥

“At the close of many births the man full of wisdom cometh unto me “Vasudeo is all”, saith he, “such a Mahatma is very difficult to find.”

“But the Yogi, labouring with assiduity, purified from sin fully perfected through manifold births, reaches the supreme goal”

The Bhagawadgita prescribes several paths to God-realisation such as Jnana Marga, Yoga Marga, Karma Marga, and Bhakti Marga or the path of devotion Bhakti Marga appeals to the heart as it is a path of affection and love for God. It is the easiest path for common people to pursue, if they have faith in their god. But it has got certain stages or levels. A devotee first wants to secure his god’s grace and desires to be benefitted in his worldly selfish motives. But as he advances on the path by the God’s grace he is transformed into a selfless devotee who loves God for His Sake and not for any ulterior motive. Bhakti Marga is explained in chapters ix and xii of the Bhagawadgita and it is described in chapter xviii in its highest stages as “the supreme secret of self-surrender to God”. It is also the culminating point in the teachings of the Bhagawadgita.

The following verse from the Bhagawadgita has influenced me most

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥१८-६६॥

“ Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone, I shall absolve you from all sins; grieve not ”.

Here the devotee is advised to surrender his all to the Supreme Being ( God ). It is “ the doctrine of complete self-surrender ”. He is to surrender his body, heart, intellect, mind and all to God. He is promised liberation from all sins then. He is asked not to grieve as thenceforth God takes, all his responsibility on himself in all matters God takes him under his protection and assures him of safety and security by showering His divine grace on him. This action of taking care of his devotee by God even at an early stage is referred to in another place, where Bhagawan says.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मा ये जना पर्युपासते ।

तेषा नित्याभियुक्ताना योगक्षेम वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९-२२ ॥

“ Those devotees however, who knowing no one else, worship Me alone, in a disinterested way to those ever harmonious, I bring full security and personally attend to their needs ”.

A similar promise of safety and security from all creatures to his devotee by Lord Rama is described in the following verse.

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।

अभय सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्भ्रत मम ॥

“ Whosoever takes refuge in Me only once and seeks my protection with the words, ‘ I am thine ’, I grant him security against all creatures Such is my vow ”

Jesus Christ has advised people in a similar strain. He says, “ Be not therefore anxious saying what shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ? or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. ” Jesus wants to declare that if man has faith in God and serves him faithfully, then He shall take care of him and look to his comforts

The true devotee is so dear to God that He appears in person in the form desired by the devotee and partakes of any paltry thing he offers Him with devotion Bhagawan says :

पत्र पुष्प फल तोय यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ ९-२६ ॥

“ Whosoever offers Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water, I appear in person before that disinterested devotee of purified intellect and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love ”

Further Bhagawan advises Arjuna to offer everything to Him so that he may be free from the fruits of his actions and he may reach God like one who has surrendered his actions to God as mentioned in the verses He says :

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेक शरणं व्रज ॥ १८-६६ ॥

यत् करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत् तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ १-२७ ॥

शुभाशुभफलैरेव मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

सत्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ १-२८ ॥

“ Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it all to me. With your mind thus established in the Yoga of Renunciation ( offering of all actions to me ), you will be freed from the bonds of Karma in the shape of good and evil consequences, and freed from them, you shall attain me ”.

In order to understand the significance and the full implication of the self-surrender which is the last stage on the path of devotion, described in the 66th verse सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज etc. in chapter xviii, we must grasp the background contained in some preceding verses

ईश्वर सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ १८-६१ ॥

“ The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings O Arjuna, by His illusive power causing all beings to revolve as though mounted on a potter's wheel ”.

This verse describes that God himself resides in all beings and He moves all beings to action by His Maya, just as ‘ the puppets are made to dance in a puppet show ’ When this knowledge dawns on a devotee he feels within himself an inner urge to surrender his all to the supreme Being ( God ), as his separate individuality has no existence thenceforth

Then Bhagawan shows him the way of devotion which will

lead him to the stage of the supreme secret of self-surrender in the following verse .

मन्मना भव भूतभक्तो मद्याजी मा नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्य ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ १८-६५ ॥

“ O Arjuna, fix thy mind upon Me, Dedicate thy heart to Me. Worship Me only and by that certainly thou shalt attain Me I promise thee, as thou art my favourite ”

But it seems that Bhagawan refers to his manifested form in this teaching and here he sums up his teaching by advising Arjuna to be a firm devotee of a perfect Avatara like himself who can be designated as सगुणब्रह्म as it is convenient and easy to do so for common people irrespective of race, caste, sect, sex or Varna or any such distinction. As a matter of fact it is convenient for all humanity if the teaching is faithfully followed. The difficulty of fixing one's mind on the unmanifested is described in the following verse —

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःख देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ १२-५ ॥

“ The difficulty of those whose minds are set on the unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the unmanifested is hard to reach by the embodied beings ”

A devotee proceeds from सगुणब्रह्म to निर्गुणब्रह्म ultimately. But until he reaches the highest stage of God-realisation by his intense devotion he has to show his selfless affection, love and devotion to his god who is manifested in some सगुण form representing the supreme Being at lower levels of Bhakti Marga. The importance of Bhakti Marga is described in several places in the Bhagawadgita for the majority of common people who can pursue the path with a devoted heart and finally attain God-realisation which is attained by a Jnani, a Yogi or a Karma Yogi pursuing their own paths according to their temperaments and inclinations.

In another place Bhagawan says how this path of devotion is easy and within reach of common people and women who were debarred from the study of the Vedas

मा हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनय ।

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परा गतिम् ॥ ९-३२ ॥

“They who take refuge in me, O Partha, though born of the womb of sin ( such as the pariah ), women, Vaishyas ( members of the

trading class ) even Shudras (those belonging to labouring classes), they too attain the supreme goal ”.

The wonderful effect of exclusive devotion to God is described in the following verses :—

अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।  
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि स ॥ ९-३० ॥  
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।  
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्त प्रणश्यति ॥ ९-३१ ॥

“ Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be considered righteous ( a saint ) for he has rightly resolved ( He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship ) Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace, know it for certain, O Kaunteya, that my devotee never perishes ”

The exclusive devotion of even the vilest sinner transforms him into a saint as वाल्या कोली, a dacoit was transformed into the inspired sage Valmiki, the illustrious author of the Ramayana.

A devotee comes to know the real nature of GOD by intense devotion and love and then he enters into God ( identifies himself with God and thus attains God-realisation ). Bhagawan says :

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।  
ततो मा तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ १८-५५ ॥

“ Through devotion he knoweth me in essence, who and what I am; having thus known Me in essence, forthwith enters into the supreme ”.

Self-surrender referred to in the verse

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य..... . ....मा शुच ॥ १८-६६

does not mean that “ a man should abandon his duties in *life* and sit idle After the self-surrender the devotee begins to feel that it is the lord who is functioning through his body, mind and speech. He feels that it is God who is doing everything using him as his instrument He deems this good fortune to continue to be used as a tool in the hands of the Lord He looks upon the whole universe as manifestation of the Lord and all activity as a divine sport (भगवल्लीला). He fares in the world as a clever and dutiful actor in this divine drama

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।  
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योग कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥ २-५० ॥

### *Significance*

Self-realisation escapes both good or bad Hence to follow perfection for Blissful Imperfection.

### *Importance of Relativity*

A microscopic examination of the above verse will surely point out that it represents the Bhagawadgita, which is the universal Bank of all practical philosophy and religion Philosophy enlightens the rational principles of Perfection and Imperfection, while Religion regulates imperfection towards perfection and confirms the polar guide to self-realisation Man is the manifestation of the invisible Omnipotency of God, and conversely God is the latent Omnipotency of man. All diversity in the unity is the outcome of His will and it creates relativity in the universe. A correct understanding and grasp of the relative value of a situation is the main factor in the critical judgment for its solution, and Sri Krishna has exactly tackled this subject of relativity to stimulate and energise the enervated Arjuna by constantly hammering upon him to discard delusive Imperfection and realise Perfection

### *Imperfection of Arjuna*

The introductory discourse of the Bhagawadgita presents



Arjuna with the typical diemmma of the short-sighted Shakespearean Hamlet, viz : " To be or not to be is the question ". Arjuna deliberates over the ethical, social, religious and spiritual aspects and consequences of the combat through his narrow vision, and decides to retire from the battle. All the pious arguments he placed before Sri Krishna to avoid his duty were definitely sensible and logical within certain limitations, but they were quite incapable of satisfying the omniscient Sri Krishna.

### *Perfection of Sri Krishna*

Naturally therefore, it was inevitable for Sri Krishna to magnify the imperfection of Arjuna and bring him to perfection, with the significant concept of philosophy and religion, and expose his personal incarnation to exemplify a concrete model for the possibility of simultaneous perfection and imperfection in man. Every now and then throughout the discourse, Sri Krishna is harping upon the destructibility of body and the eternity of soul, and impressing upon Arjuna the control of destiny over human action. Evidently it necessitates in carrying to one's duty the selfless attitude of " Thy will be done ", which becomes possible only after the self-realisation of perfection. It is essential therefore to understand the " wide gate of hell " i.e. the entrance of Omnipotence in man, and 'Narrow gate of Heavens " i.e. the pathway to God. The Bhagawadgita invariably proves superior to the Bible in contributing a logical and scientific explanation of these abstract gates in the New Testament, showing " the wide gate " to be the real scientific basis of psychology and the " Narrow gate " to be the rational and spiritual way to perfection. Let us see how ?

### *Breath, the medium of Imperfection and Perfection*

In the case of electricity, there is the necessity of the medium of wire for its transmission to the radio, a bulb, fan or any other machinery. Electricity is a material unmanifest energy which must be handled through the medium of wire by the living energy in man. Electricity cannot work of its own free will. Such is not the case with the spiritual omnipotency or God's will. God prepares a cycle in the human lungs with the inhalation of breath to contact the different organs of the body and assuming bodily imperfection calls Himself a man. After the working of the organs

the omnipotency gets disconnected with the body and resumes its perfection of God.

### *Conscious Mind*

Thus God takes the impression of the material five elements through the five sensory organs of the human body with the aid of breath or inspiration, and becomes the conscious mind of man; i. e. the material impressions take the spiritual form with God. In the conscious working of this spiritual mind, these spiritual impressions again resume the material form with the aid of breath or inhalation. Breath has the limitation of the body and hence the past experience of mind which was taken by all the five senses has to be taken singly with words only in the conscious working of the mind in the waking condition of man. The connections and disconnections of God with the human body through respiration are going on with such a velocity that they cannot be demarked by the sensory organs and hence instead of demarking God from the body, the human mind gets the delusion of becoming one with the body and forces perfection of God to delude and assume false imperfection of man and that is why it is called "the wide gate of Hell." This is just like the state of our mind when we temporarily forget ourselves and becoming one with the cinema picture experience with delusion the pleasure and pain of the incidents on the screen. This same delusion of mind leads to the theory of Rebirth

### *Subconscious Mind and Rebirth*

The conscious mind of this birth becomes the subconscious mind and causation of the next birth at the time of death, because the mind is nothing but the deluded God, just like an actor playing different roles in different plays at different times. Perfection is the vital essence of all the five sensory organs and the mind, and so at the time of death the mind along with these vital sensory organs seeks rebirth to fulfil its unsatisfied desires, but after self-realisation in this birth, it has the choice to remain in perfection or again in Imperfection with rebirth at its own free will. Very often people ask: "If the conscious mind is the sub-conscious mind of the next birth, then why do we not remember the past birth?" This is fallacious because these two minds are formed by different

organs of two different bodies and so they are just like the different minds of two persons and hence the new mind in this birth cannot remember the mind in the past birth. Now let us see how the mind can attain perfection and be free from Imperfection.

### *Universal Mind and Salvation*

We have seen that the medium of wire is necessary for the transmission of electrical energy. If the wire is connected to a radio we can hear the singer, but if it is disconnected and attached to a bulb, it stops the radio and instead, we get the light. Similarly, if we disconnect our breath with the organs and mind, and connect it with the name of God, our Imperfection will resume Perfection. Consciousness of God through breath is the "Narrow and straight Gate to Heaven". Every word is an expression of power but all universal words show the limited material power while the name of God expresses the Omnipotent power and that is why the Bible rightly says "In the beginning was the word; the word was with God; there was life in the word; everything was created by the word" Thus when the Omnipotency is attained one can simultaneously enjoy perfection and imperfection like God through self-less action, and that is the propriety in advising Arjuna "to remember His Name and fight on". Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to control senses and set his mind and intellect on Him, and for this he shows the medium of breath to drive all the Imperfection to Perfection, and this can be pointed out even from his definition of Divine courage "That courage is Divine which maintains an unbroken harmony between the mind, the breath and the senses." Spiritual power can be experienced only in the spiritual form of the five elements just like those in the dream, with the only difference that here the intellect is the witness to these spiritual experiences, while in the case of a dream there is no living witness. Dream is the working of the latent omnipotency in man and that is why we can experience there the conscious mind of the present birth, the sub-conscious mind of the past births and even the universal mind of the future births. *The final spiritual experience of the universal mind makes a man realise that he is the whole universe* Let me assure that I have not made this statement theoretically only, but this is my personal highest spiritual experience in life.

*Superconscious mind and Perfection*

All the same even the above stage of the spiritual experiences of the universal mind, which is experienced with the remembrance of His Name, is not the Perfection, because there stands the dualism and there is not the possibility of achieving authority over omnipotency. A cyclist is able to run the cycle on the wire in the circus, only with great practice; similarly with constant devotion man surpasses this stage of spiritual experience and leaving his imperfection finds union with God and gets authority over the omnipotency : In this super-conscious state one can play the double role of perfection and imperfection simultaneously and enjoy bliss equally in both, just like the well-known Prince Janaka in the past. *But this state is absolutely at the Will of God* : Sri Krishna says : “ I bless men with the guidance of proper spiritual path, by which they can approach me, *but the ultimate realisation is dependent completely on my choice* : I enter into their breath and brightening their intellect, *I banish all their ignorance with my omnipotency.*

*Self-less Action*

Thus, we see that the remembrance of the name of God with breath forms a bridge of Perfection over Imperfection, connecting the two stages of Perfection, which stand before and after the respiration. Thus one can enjoy the Bliss of His name as well as the Bliss of self-less Action in Imperfection. This is the outcome of the whole discourse of the Bhagawadgita. If there had been no Sri Krishna to stimulate Arjuna to action, certainly he was bound to take up arms, after a while, as per his inborn nature of a warrior; but that action would have led him to degradation in the cycle of birth and death. A ring-master like Sri Krishna would never allow his devotee to lower himself to such a degradation and that is why he presented himself on the scene as Arjuna's charioteer and caught hold of the opportune moment of Arjuna's utter despondency to initiate him in spiritualism to overcome his Imperfection and elevate him to His Perfection. When a man attains omnipotency, the whole universe becomes spiritualised for him and it is this stage when all philosophy has to leave behind its logic and accept empirically the hypothesis of abstract omnipotency or will power of God, empirically for the creation of the universe. *Leave aside this hypothesis of Omni-*

*potency and the Bhagawatgita and all the past and present scriptures in the universe stand no where. Real faith, real knowledge, real union, real renunciation, and real self-less action are possible only in this final stage of omnipotency, and all the divine characteristics like charity, non-violence, self-control, self-denial, truthfulness, etc., are only the by-products of perfection and not the means to attain the same, because they are part of perfection and hence incapable to take a man to perfection. The name of God alone spiritualises and leads a man to self-introspection through relativity and finally at His will, endows him with omnipotency, which is the ultimate goal of human life, and the same can be verified from the verse I choose as the nucleus, not only of the Bhagawad-gita, but all the universal philosophy and religions in the past, present and the future world. Amen.*

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कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।  
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति संगं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ५-११ ॥

The effort being made by the Gita Mandal to give a response to the call for universal peace by means of exposition of the moral of the Gita is laudable and is a great cause. I am, therefore, glad to contribute these lines to their noble mission of gratitude for the whole world.

The Bhagawadgita is a precious jewel of knowledge of human affairs. Out of the entirety of the Mahabharata such moral values as glorious serenity of human life, explanation of the principle of purity of life itself, the abstract and concrete manifestation of truth and the model and progressive course of human society have come to light in the form of verses. That is Bhagawadgita. In short, it can be described as a heavenly message which propagates throughout this universe the religion of all nature by means of supreme upliftment of man. The miracle of transforming the course of life into a fully developed state through exquisite sublimation has been accomplished through the discourse between the Lord and his disciple.

The main question here is what is the extension and highest perfection of man and which is the path that leads to it ? The full presentation of this theme by means of practical illustrations has been achieved in poetic form. Every verse and every thought in this great book helps to invoke the eternal values in human life and thus acts as a deep mystical echo of the sound of moral philo-

sophy by making clear the real meaning of life. When the main idea is the faultless exposition to disperse suspicion and doubt, it is not necessary to dwell upon the importance of a particular verse in a special way. Nevertheless every particle of this moral principle carries the entire aspect of the glorious exposition of the original nature. There may be a dimension to it but there is not the slightest subtraction from the total qualities. Just as a drop of water holds all the properties of water, the meaning of every verse of the Gita is endowed with the lofty force of the principle of the whole dialogue. Though the greatness of man is limited within the four corners of the universe, it moves on the earth in a human shape. Similarly, the purity, splendour, greatness, vastness, reality of the life-pervading stream of thought in the Gita are not contained in any particular verse but all these qualities are to be found in the body of each verse.

Against the above background I am taking up a verse from this book which is full of advice that is essential to raise the status of man who by nature is a progressive being. *Man is God*. Man is the embodiment of the great soul born on the earth with action, will and power of knowledge. His frame reveals the uninterrupted image of life's eternal principle. His action is accompanied by desire as well as knowledge, which reflects his good or bad character. Really speaking, the secret praise of the greatness and the mystic song of his progress is concealed in every formative change in his life. Every human being is engaged in a struggle to move in this enlightened world with a keen desire to experience his over-powers and light through every action impelled as he is by the brightest of ambitions to become ideal and self enlightened. If one examines the natural feelings of a human being it becomes clear to him that in his own stature the instrument of his greatness is being played upon. In his movements is concentrated the sweet music of oneness which runs throughout the universe. At the height of his knowledge can be heard the notes of music which revitalise the world. All this naturally leads to establishing the temple of life on the holiest ground. Hence he becomes the point of rest for the God who is controlling the universe. In his form alone will the Almighty manifest with all his power and glory. That-goddess which is adorned with the beauty of life, who is all powerful and protector of world, takes a glimpse of the universe only

through the medium of man and with the help of knowledge or action and desire. The great ornament of nature is MAN but.... The rumbling of this holy and overall human inspiration does not reach the ears of man who is deeply lost in darkness and ignorance. He cannot simply grasp them. His eyes are incapable of seeing the light of the rising power of soul. The tiny pot of his selfish heart cannot hold the vast ocean of knowledge that is nectar like. That is why he becomes the cause of the sad, impoverished and destructive appearance of the world though he is the leader of all holiness. Though he is godlike, man sacrifices his life in the deep and rotten gorge of uncontrolled desire by struggle, tumbling, engrossing himself in the perishable dream of happiness, and by clapping the wings of his idiotic ideas in the emptiness of utter ignorance. This however is not his real self. That self a powerful beam of the soul is but thickly covered with deep slumber. That is why Gita has raised the solemn voice and blown the holy conch to awaken him. Dear Man ! Get up ! Go and wander in the glory of self, outside infatuation and vice. Expand with speed and removing the bad odour of your ugly life make this garden of the world fragrant with the scent of the soul. You are God ! Come out of the net of ignorance singing the strong hymn of pure life by concentrating on the soul.

आत्मानं रथिन विद्धि शरीरम् रथमेव तु ।

बुद्धि तु सारथि विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥ कठोपनिषत् १।३।३॥

“ Know thyself as the occupant, the body as the chariot, the reason as the driver and the mind as the whip. ” Oh man! Drive such a chariot in divine light and divine speed and be prepared for the fierce battle against evil and sin in the world. Do keep your pure form of life under control Be aware !

This is the lofty song of Gita. The fifth note has melody. By the blowing of the conch the emotional throbbing in the heart of the earth have been inspired with life. The eleventh verse in the 5th Chapter which gives the beautiful message of self-purification is indicative of the preciousness of Gita and so I am trying to expand it.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।

योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ५-११ ॥



This verse is the epic which directs us to the horizon of pure life. Lord Krishna is explaining to Arjuna the real nature of the soul in order to help the rise of the sun of knowledge which will remove the evil darkness enveloping the serene flow of nature.

It is true that all religions have proclaimed the principles of holy discipline to dispel the evil of the body by great philosophy. If we however make comparison we find that Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, have all regarded the body as evil though the body itself must possess the power to remove the sin. This has not left any scope for improvement of the world. The perverted belief that pure life is difficult to lead is pervading the temples of all the religions. The Lord however built the temple of Gita and proclaimed with victory the great voice which sets aside such beliefs "Oh man ! you are really inseparable from the soul". By this slogan the Lord has reverberated the whole Indian scene. The Gita has smashed the dirty pots full of evil, let flow the streams of the good and took them up to the vast ocean of purified life.

The assumption that the body is evil is destructive for the world and makes man devoid of action and vigour. On the contrary, Gita has echoed the notes of secret music by which the body is of divine calibre. The Lord has proclaimed the elevation of the soul taught by the Vedas. It has decreed that it is unreligious to separate the individual from the universe. When it exhorts the orphans of the universe to become religious it leaves no room for the false ideas about religions.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि सयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ भगवद्गीता ३-६६ ॥

'He has curbed the physical organs but mentally he still contemplates the objects of their pleasure. This is hypocrisy.' That is the clear warning given to its devotees. The meaning of false conduct is dispicable behaviour. The cause of this behaviour is evident from the picture of the world of today. The fallen people masquerading under purity are out to trample upon human values and all this under the belief that they are standing under the banner of the religion.

What a pity ! This however is not the fault of the infatuated person. No ! No ! Wickedness thrives in the world. But it is not

correct to say that world cannot live in the absence of such wickedness. The ignorant souls are awakened in the same manner as Arjuna was awakened from his misconception. They mistook as true religion the rampage which destroys the temple of life itself by firing the guns of desire on the walls of enjoyment and after their conscience was sealed within the clouds of false notions about what is duty and what is infatuation. Man who has become desparate in the darkness of ignorance regards as progress what is exactly the opposite of it and ruins himself. He wants fresh and clear air, but his heart is breaking up under the impact of so many religious orders of different nations. Naturally he does not realise that the whole world is raising false hopes of prosperity.

In these circumstances, the spiritual words which will remove the slumber of man who has become the orphan of the world, allow him to come out of all kinds of socialistic orders, evil deeds and sensuous life for a little while are to be heard through the godly song which invokes all purity. Let him belong to any country, or society but as a man let him come under the beam of light which flows from the words of the Lord. Let him not be a bee caught up in the narrow-minded Society, or a dried leaf in the storm of false national respect or a blind man having lost his sight in malicious religious dogma. Let him not be a Dhritarashtra who is blinded by Maya. Let him become a pure uncontaminated seeker of true path. Let him be Sanjaya. Do not have a wicked heart of the lusty person if you have to purify yourself and the life around. Be a songster of the theme of sacrifice and benevolence. The purity should not be destroyed by addiction to vice but you should be a sage in order that the rays of knowledge dawn on the earth. The sage is the support of what is holy in life. Let the sage in you come out. Your life is the life of such a sage and both you and the world around you will be benefited. Now we may draw the outline of man who is inspired with the fiery ideal and what he does and how he ascends to glory.

*Purity of Life means Purity of Soul* : The common principle of the universe is 'life'. It is manifested by the difference between death and movement. From a stone to a wise man there is life. Life is a sacrifice made to take the imperfect towards perfection. The soul or living are not ordinary things but they are to be

recognised by the word 'JEEVAN' which is moving or going about by its own force. In this state alone, is to be found the difference between lifelessness and energy. Where there is no Jeevan there is neither of these two. Hence it is the main principle. By discarding lifelessness Jeevan does not exist. Both must be present when there is Jeevan. Thus the purification of life is the first and final devotional song.

Action indicates life. Absence of desire glorifies the action. Life becomes greatest when sacrifice of attachment takes place. The disclosure of the universal soul is only the exhibition of life's purity. That is why sin or merit lies in action and freedom from desire and not in renunciation. Of course by renunciation life becomes glorious i. e. it is purified. For this purpose the words "for soul's purification" have been used in the verse. For the purpose of self-purification action, knowledge and desire are all necessary. Such man is the sage. We may develop this further in the context of the verse.

The Yogi seems engrossed in action but there is no feeling as a doer. The action is there but he is not the author. If there is no author at all how can any action have bad or good effect on body? This is the substance of the stanza. This exhibits the unrestricted activity of the Yogi as much as the purest form of the subject of action. The sun rises and every one gets his light but for him there is no other position except to remain as he is. He neither gives light or withholds it. Similarly, the Yogi with his soul purified and full enlightenment and knowledge remains in action. He purifies the action itself by his own state. If human life is to ascend to this position the remedy must be highly purificatory and that is implicit in the verse. The great experiment of removing defects in the action is related. It is not only not desirable to discard action for fear of partaking the defect but in each action there should be a purifying process.

*Desireless and unattached* - Here loss of desire and attachment occur naturally. To give up the desire towards a particular result of the deed is explained as being desireless. Similarly to enjoy without attachment of the mind is acknowledged as a virtue in society. The trend of the Gita is however opposed to this. We can examine how this negative attitude is not faultless and consider the proper explanation.

Take sacrifice of desire for ultimate fruit of labour. Want of desire takes away the tendency to act. The doer is no doubt without desire but this feeling becomes dominating. That means the sacrifice of desire becomes his activity and another desire is produced which is again to be discarded. This process goes on for ever. It is not possible to be devoid of desire of any kind. Whether he leaves desire and enjoys the thing the fruit will appear before him. So here he has to cast away the pride of a doer. But here we come to the same difficulty as the process starts again. The question arises how to accomplish the task. Those who do not understand the clue to want of desire and simply dream of discarding the fruit are hypocrites or lose action itself. This leads to degradation of society. The person himself goes downward and drags the society along with him. If he comes in the garb of a great soul or an ideal person the same picture of polluted society will be seen in this country. Today's night of darkness is the follower of hypocrisy of desire. Poor man; without perfect understanding or best knowledge he indulged in being free from desire and the result is that some haughty and some inactive persons are wrecking the purity and idealistic nature of society. It is, therefore, essential to know what is meant by this. Even big persons have tried to mislead the people and the whole of the country is today led towards evil. We shall do well to go into this aspect cautiously. The pretence of selflessness is growing and under the name of non-attachment we see people indulging in senseless religious labels.

According to Indian philosophy non-attachment is a deceptivity and self-degrading tendency. There is no dearth of such lofted feeling in India that one is practising non-attachment while deeply imbued with pleasures of the organs. This is done in order to obtain a licence for selfishness, infatuation and sensuality. We clearly think that the thought of non-attachment occurs only to the Nihilists. There is a fallacy in this ideology. To consider the performance of universe which is brought out by the absolute principle of the soul as useless or perishable and to become unattached notionally is a sign of individual fall and social evil. When one thinks of giving up attachment one has accepted the false notion that world is perishable. This hardens the belief that every thing is senseless, worth throwing away and dead and that there

is nothing in the world which is eternal. Shankaracharya said that Brahma is real and world is false, which means that the knowledge of Brahma as the world itself is false. Otherwise he would not have said that life is Brahma and nothing else. The world appears as liable to be destroyed when it is looked at as an object of enjoyment and not in its true nature. It should be realised by the sense of life. The devotee of non-attachment however takes it as dull and is not faithful to its true form with the result that he rejects all that is beautiful, permanent and holy in the world. We totally reject this attitude. For this 'renunciation' is the proper word. It makes the world pure.

*Indifference* : This is looked upon as something bad. This feeling is due to want of it. Without it self-interest and indulgence is growing in the pretext of non-attachment. From the ascetic to the politician all have turned to it. That is a mistaken attitude.

*Non-association* : The word non-association must be noted. It is not the same as losing the union. The unholy urge for union is to be given up and not the union. This is self-denial. The difference between lifelessness and vitality vanishes by this realisation. It develops the true conscience. You may ask how self-denial can purify the world. It tells you to look at the world as the incarnation of god and give up the urge for enjoyment and in this way help towards its evolution. Ramkrishna Paramhansa has rendered the truth of this nicely. With his wife his relation was that between the subject and object of enjoyment. He gave up the desire for enjoyment, made his heart pure and worshipped her as a goddess. Here she was not converted but he was. He turned away from the path of enjoyment. What was to be enjoyed was made as that to be served. What a greatness this is ! In Mahatma Gandhiji's life the same thing happened and Kasturba became mother. In Puranas the story of Shuka reveals the same moral. Menka was sent to him by Indra to make him sensuous. She made all bodily movement to attract him. He was unattached. When that could not serve he showed renunciation, looked her nude forms and she thought for a moment that she was successful. He said that he would fulfil all her desires but she should give him first what he wanted. She readily agreed when he begged to be placed in her lap and allowed to suck like her child. She became mother and Indra was defeated. Such denial is wholesome. By this the faith in

knowledge is strengthened. This only means that loss of union should be achieved by non-union i. e. giving up the sense of union.

Now let see the desire. The man who is not after fruit attains non-desirability. Hence desire is not an attribute of action but the epithet of the doer. He does not become inactive. In that case inaction will be identical with action without desire which is fallacious. We have to achieve the goal. For this pure desire is essential. The tenth verse in the chapter C also tells the same. We have to become like the lotus-leaf which does not become wet though holding water. This aloofness must be developed. This is most important in the traditional Indian way of worship. For this the egoism of doer must go. Over and above he must direct his conscience, mind and heart to the soul. We have to be Satkama. The Rishis were so. There should be keenness for the light of truth. Bodily, mentally and by reason the desire for union should go and the organs must be devoted to the act.

When we do a thing we are unaware of its pure and exact form. This ignorance is responsible for excessive labour or waste of time. The root cause of this is the expectation behind the act. The act will become more and more pure as the desire for the result diminishes. When this defect is removed the quality of disinterestedness grows. Kama means evil desire. When the object is served without sense of enjoyment the desire is purified. The senses become so expert in the doing that for the author, his mind and reason are unnecessary. To become selfless is to do the work most naturally. The very taste of the true form and action is to be sacrificed. This is real renunciation and the author is the purest one. To achieve this one must be in meditation even while doing a thing and he is not tied down by the act. Such man is Yogi and being devoid of any thought becomes a true devotee.

The Yogi is to be a true devotee; otherwise he cannot enjoin himself with God in mind, body and heart. Saint Tukaram has raised the same voice

हेचि थोर भक्ति आवडती देवा सकल्पावी माया संसाराची ।

“The noble devotion pleases God and the attraction of the world is given up”.

The message is the same here; similarly Dynaneshwar says

मनबुद्धि जिहीं घर केले । माझ्या ठायीं आपुलें ऐसें कांहीं । आठवेचि ना ॥

“ Those who have surrendered to me in mind and reason do not think of anything as their own ”.

Now we can see how according to the Vedas the conclusion is the same. To make life very pure and strong, sacrifice is the remedy. This does not mean abandonment of object but of the thought of enjoyment. This is mentioned in Atharvaveda.

If the life is to become holy, purity must enter. The mind is the main factor in this. Without purification of mind there can be no knowledge of self or feeling of equality or balanced reason.

In the Atharvaveda the purification of mind is referred to :—

इद देवा. शृणुत ये यज्ञीयाः स्थ ।

भरद्वाजो मह्यमुक्त्यानि शसति ।

पाशे सबद्धो दुरिते नि युज्यता ।

यो अस्माक मन इद हिनस्ति ॥ काण्ड २।१२।२ ॥

He whose mind is pure and elevated is Yogi. Gita preaches the same. The self-realised soul alone knows how to keep the mind balanced. The great and venerated are described as the learned who see everything equal. From the above reference we can say that the realised soul resorts to self-denial for attaining the knowledge of self. The man whose mind is wicked and unholy leads life without moral strength and vigour. Hence he cannot become Yogi. The way to attain immortality is to make the mind strong and pure. The word ‘ BHARDWAJA ’ is most important in the above stanza. It means source of strength. For purifying the mind food, prayer and sublimation are necessary. Food includes water, ghee, fruit and nourishment. If the conduct is pure and extremely righteous, food and water help to bring freedom from malady, which is threefold, viz. mental, intellectual and physical. The strength revealed by this freedom is that of the mind. Prayer makes all action and deeds truthful by means of strength, concentration, speed and direction. Life becomes rich and spiritual power is acquired. In sublimation the taste is given up and realisation comes. Waja means the triple strength and Bharat means infusion.

The mind also becomes pure by meditation and concentration and sweet language. Purification by prayer means giving up all ego or self. The author of the deed is pure. Subsequently the realisation of soul is obtained. Adherence to truth must increase



through a strong mind and bad company must be given up. Understanding is the fire kindled from Vedas. Evil thoughts must be sacrificed in the fire. If the faith in knowledge increases, bad thoughts and evil plans disappear. Such a person acquires the power of bringing to truth whatever is said by him. In the 12th hymn of Atharvaveda this sort of prayer is related. The weapon of non-association will be used for cutting the seven breaths and eight knots. The breath gives inspiration to the organs and intelligence and the mind makes them do good or bad deeds. The result is rise or fall. In the science of Yoga the cutting of eight knots and piercing of six wheels is described. The control of breath means control of organs. The control of organs does not mean complete closure but a curb on their inclination towards enjoyment.

The outward urge of the <sup>म</sup>senses must be turned inward.

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सगस्तेषूपजायते ॥ भगवद्गीता २-६२

By pondering over the experience of enjoyment the attachment is developed. If this attraction is to be abandoned there is no point in dismissing the object. The process of thinking about the enjoyment must stop. The principle of denial must be imbibed in the heart. Then gradually with prayer and solemn meditation the defect will be removed. In सङ्ग त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये one thing is to be remembered and that is the sign of taking away the association from the deed is to make the author absolutely egoless. By denial and knowledge he pierces through the eight wheels. Immediately a pure fluid is created within him which means that the main wheel is bloomed. His true conscience comes into play and he does everything without the least affection. Life and world are both elevated. This philosophy is again narrated in Atharvaveda when the remedy for immortality is dwelt upon. It tells the man to go to the God of death by being a messenger of knowledge and thriving on equality which means conquest of death. One who accompanies the God of death as an equal and is himself beyond death. Nachiketa lived in the house of Yama and with knowledge comes back again on the earth for imparting knowledge. The Yogi is immortal. During life he is on an equal footing with the Lord of death and leaves the world when he desires and then becomes free. Self-denial is a weapon in this process. This is also described similarly for worldly life which is compared to a



tree. The denial helps to cut down the branches of the tree and man is identified with self. This feeling is nothing but being completely interested in the welfare, happiness and misery of others. Such a soul purifies the world in the same way as he himself was purified. He contributes to the other's happiness but is himself aloof in mind and intelligence. That is he does not take the credit and he is dexterous in doing this. As we have seen by purification of the deed the purity of desire, then its fulfillment and lastly its complete absence is developed. He is thus a free soul.

Today we are engaged in different experiments but the way of Gita will lead us to the ideal goal. Any other method would turn out to be a naked dance of evil tendencies. The young and old alike should adopt this way and should know the Yogi not merely as the son of God but the glory of the earth and the universe. This had been clarified as much as possible from the stanza quoted above. May God Krishna who protected the earth from wicked Kauravas, who gave inspiration to Arjuna, and by giving him knowledge brought him to the front of battle also raise the sacred souls of this land and let all prosper.



आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ६-३२ ॥

The Gita, a dialogue of 700 verses, mainly between Bhagawan Sri Krishna and Arjuna appearing as अध्याय 25 to 42 in the भीष्मपर्व of the Mahabharata is in essence a treatise on Philosophy. The Gita included in the प्रस्थानत्रयी of Indian philosophy along with the Upanisads and the Brahmasutras can be taken to be a guide to those who start in quest of God.

Sayings of the *Upanisads* like “आत्मा वा इदम् एकः एव अग्रे आसीत् । न अन्यत् किञ्चन मिषत् ” ऐतरेय १।१।१ 1. e. ‘First (अग्रे) all this (इदम्) was आत्मा alone, Nothing else existing’—are clear and convincing enough to show what they (the उपनिषत्सु) regard the world as having evolved out of one primitive principle, which they called आत्मा (as in above), सत् as in सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत् (छादोग्य ६-२-१) or ब्रह्म as in सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म (छा ३-१४-१).

Different Upanisads, however, describe this first principle viz आत्मा, ब्रह्म or सत् in various ways and words, thus creating at least an apparent ambiguity, if not a clear contradiction and therefore, there arose the necessity of the sayings of the Upanisads being properly explained and co-ordinated. This was done by बादरायण in his ब्रह्मसूत्रसु.

Between the period of the Upanisads and the Mahabharata

several systems of philosophy had developed, trying to reconcile such वेदवचन as कुरु कर्म, त्यजेति च i. e. Do your duty : Give it up; and recommending a proper and an easier way to attain निःश्रेयस् or मोक्ष beatitude or Bliss Eternal—the goal supreme of human life.

Once again, with a similar object in view, like that of बादरायण viz reconciling and co-ordinating these various systems of philosophy व्यासमहर्षि the author of the Mahabharata inserted Gita in it. The Gita lays emphasis on the साध्य viz निःश्रेयस् or मोक्ष allowing freedom of choice to the साधक the aspirant, as regards the means ( path मार्ग ) that may suit him. It may be भक्ति, कर्म योग, त्याग सन्यास or any other, suggesting that all means that really aim at one and the same goal cannot be divergent or contradictory. The Gita preaches in brief that निःश्रेयस्, मोक्ष or सुखमात्यन्तिकम् is the goal of Human Life, to which भक्ति, i. e. Devotion to God, and कर्म, i. e. actions performed, as enjoined by Him as one's own for His adoration as he appears in all Beings, gradually lead. When the साधक reaches the final stage, he is free from all desires ( निस्पृह. सर्वकामेभ्य. ६-१८ ), when the mind controlled and concentrated ceases to act ( यत्नोपरमते चित्त निरुद्ध योगसेवया ॥ ६-२० ) and when the साधक becomes immersed in ineffable joy, seeing himself i. e. his own Self आत्मा in and by himself ( यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मानं तुष्यति ॥ ६-२० ), realises the state as Bliss Eternal ( सुखम् आत्यन्तिकं वेत्ति ॥ ६-२१ ), and gets no fall from it ( स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यः योगः अनिर्विण्णचेतसा ६-२३ ).

This is the path which man has indefatigably to follow till he reaches his goal ( तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ६-२३. ) That state is called योग where there is absolute freedom from any chance of being in contact with दुःख i. e. pain, misery, or sorrow. This is the goal.

Let me point out, in conclusion, the following verse for the readers' guidance :

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ६-३२ ॥

“ He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything in the image of his own self, whether in pleasure or in pain is considered a perfect Yogi. ”

Let the reader and student of the Gita be a परम योगी. Let him act towards others as he would wish them to act towards him. Teachings and preachings of the Gita must be practised and are not to be simply read.

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तमेव शरण गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ १८-६२ ॥

In the Bhagawadgita there are ten verses which show the way, and means of obtaining peace of mind. Amongst these, in my opinion, the verse which shows the leading and straightforward way, is quoted above.

It means .

Seek His shelter alone with all your being, O Bharata ( Arjuna ), by His grace you will obtain supreme peace and eternal abode.

One must become conscious of the presence of God in all the levels of one's attainment. The typical example of integral love is that of the love of Radha for Krishna which was manifested in every phase from the spiritual to the physical. This is what is meant by ' Sarvabhavena '.

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयत शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुत सुखम् ॥ ( २-६६ )

For one who has not controlled his mind, there is no intelligence, nor for him is there the power of concentration or devotion to God; There is no peace for him who is without concentration. For the one who is unpeaceful, how can there be happiness ?

This verse is of utmost importance to the follower of the path of devotion for obtaining continuous calmness of mind or purity of mind. The path of devotion lays down two principal

means for controlling the mind and senses viz : (1) Singing praises, eulogising the glory of the Lord and, (2) devotion to the Lord i. e. the idea that he is propitiating his Lord with his deeds. As enjoined in the Veda : “ Tanme manah shivasankalpamastu ” ( Let my mind have good and pure thoughts ), one should off and on concentrate one's mind on the Deity of his choice and propitiate the Deity with pure thoughts such as my Lord is looking at me with a pleasing smile, is loving me, is placing his blessed hand on my head and is telling me that I am His and so on. In this manner when devotion to God becomes perfect, one attains peace of mind.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यः प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ ( २-७० )

He in whom all desires enter as waters into the sea, which though being filled is always motionless, attains to peace and not he who hankers after desires This way of attaining to peace is only available to those who are stable in intelligence. It is very difficult to be availed of by persons of ordinary intelligence.

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमाश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ ( २-७१ )

He who abandons all desires and acts without any longing, who has no sense of mineness or egotism, he attains to peace.

Such peace is only attainable by those who have renounced the worldly life and are stable in intelligence.

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ( ४-३९ )

He who has faith, who is absorbed in it ( i. e. wisdom ) and who has subdued his senses gains wisdom and having gained wisdom attains to the supreme peace without any loss of time.

This peace also is obtainable by only those intelligent persons who have subdued their senses.

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ ( ५-१२ )

He who is disciplined in action attains to peace well-founded

and firm by abandoning attachment to the fruits of his deeds, but he who is not disciplined in action and is attached to the fruits ( of his deeds ) is bound.

The peace as described above is important from the viewpoint of him, who has perfected his method of work by abandoning attachment to the fruits of his deeds

भोक्तार यज्ञतपसा सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृद सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मा शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ ( ५-२९ )

He who knows Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the Great Lord of all the Worlds, the Friend of all beings, attains to peace. He who has a firm faith and belief that God is a kind friend of all beings i. e. He bestows favours on all without any expectation of return is benevolent and believes that whatever God does is for his well-being, attains to peace Such peace is obtainable by him who has absolute faith that whatever God does is well and good.

युञ्जन्तैव सदात्मान योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमा मत्सस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ ( ६-१५ )

The sage with subdued mind, who ever keeps himself thus harmonised attains to peace, the supreme liberation, which abides in Me.

The means of attaining to this peace is only for those sages who have subdued the mind by controlling all its activities and have fixed their thought constantly on God. It is a difficult path for a common man

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्त प्रणश्यति ॥ ( ९-३१ )

He becomes swiftly righteous and obtains eternal peace O Arjuna know you for certain that My devotee never perishes.

*Bhajate mamananyabhak* . Those who worship God with undistracted devotion attain to such peace To achieve undistracted devotion is a herculean task This method of attaining to peace is therefore difficult for a common man

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ ( १२-१२ )

Knowledge is indeed better than the practice of concentration, meditation is better than knowledge, the renunciation of the fruit of action is better than meditation; peace is attained to immediately on renunciation.

It is very difficult to make the mind so liberal as to renounce the fruit of action. In the heart of hearts infinitesimal desires for the fruit of actions do remain. To renounce them is easy to say but very difficult to perform. One may give up one's wealth, but to abandon the desire to obtain dignified status in society is a very difficult task even for those sages who have totally renounced the mundane affairs.

Hence in my view the last method as enjoined by the Lord is :—

तमेव शरण गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परा शान्ति स्थानं प्राप्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ (१८.६२)

It is the only straightforward way for persons like us who have no proper practice of concentration as is required in Yoga and have no proper insight in the way of knowledge. In this verse by the words “ tam eva ” the Lord indicated indirectly is Lord Sri Krishna Himself and that is why it is enjoined in verse 66 : *mam ekam sharanam vraja* ( come to Me alone for shelter ). When a person thinks that he is devoid of any means and thus becomes completely submissive, then alone he seeks earnestly for shelter of the Lord. By the word *ekam* ( alone ) the indication is that whosoever seeks shelter, not from other Gods and Goddesses, but from Me ( Sri Krishna ) alone, I shall release him from all the evils acquired by him during his innumerable lives This is the utmost supreme secret and final and decisive commandment of the Lord. By complete surrender, it is not that one attains to supreme peace alone, but obtains likewise the eternal abode of the Lord. Whereas by the means stated in the previous nine verses, one attains to peace alone. The surrender should be however with all one's being i. e it should be unconditional surrender By “ *sarvabhavena* ” ( with all one's being ) it is meant that a firm belief should be created in one that all his senses, mind, intellect, and the worldly things, wife, sons, wealth and landed property, all these belong to the Lord, and oneself is also the servant of the Lord for innumerable lives. This surrender does not envisage abandonment alone, but



implies complete surrender to Sri Krishna of all the things mentioned above. Such a surrender alone is the only means of obtaining "tatprasada" the favour of the Lord i. e. His favour and pleasure. The Lord, therefore, by his pleasure does not bestow peace alone, but entry into his abode also.

I will conclude this discourse by elucidating as would suit the occasion, the surrender as mentioned above. The makers of Shastras have laid down six principles which are enjoined to be acted upon by the seekers of surrender.

अनुकूलस्य सकल्प प्रतिकूलस्य वर्जनम् ।  
रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वासो भर्तृत्वे वरण तथा  
आत्मनिक्षेपः कार्पण्य षड्विधा शरणागतिः ।

( 1 ) अनुकूलस्य सङ्कल्पः i e even if one is unable to perform the duties as laid down in the scriptures, one should make a firm determination to perform these. As soon as one gets up in the morning one should offer heartfelt prayer to the Lord whose shelter one has sought for, "O Lord make me do such deeds during the day as would please your heart At night before going to bed, one should as enjoined by the Lord, surrender all these deeds to the Lord Sri Krishna "tat kurusva madāpanam". O Arjuna do that as an offering to me ( ix-27 ).

( 2 ) प्रतिकूलस्य वर्जनम् : One should forsake such deeds as are against the commandments of the religion and scriptures

( 3 ) रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वास A man should have firm faith that Sri Krishna whose shelter he has sought for will certainly protect him Because "samshayatma vinashtyati" ( one who is of doubting nature, perishes ).

( 4 ) भर्तृत्वे वरणम् The Lord declares Himself as "Gatir bharta" ( ix-18 ) i e I am the upholder of all beings. I am the Lord who keep and maintain them just as a bride selects a proper person in the Svayamvara ( selection of bride-groom ) and accepts him as husband; similarly thinking the Lord as one's upholder he should with undistracted mind ( ananyaḥ chintayanto mam, ix-22 ) serve the Lord like a chaste wife Because He brings attainment of what they have not and security in what they have, to persons who worship Him meditating on Him alone, and such a person can alone be the upholder.

( 5 ) आत्मनिक्षेपः Off and on one should remember that one has surrendered everything to the Lord.

( 6 ) कार्पण्यम् : meekness, submissiveness. One should always be submissive and avoid egotism. One should not be egoistic about one's achievements The Lord under His supervision is getting good deeds done through me. I am under His control. If one behaves like this, one will be happy.

श्रीकृष्णाधीनं सुख यस्य स सुखीति निगद्यते ।

He is said to be happy whose happiness is under the control of Sri Krishna.

Thus in my view verses 62-66 from the 18th Adhyaya of the Gita are most important. " Sarvadharmā paritayajya " is the utmost secret commandment of the Lord. Sri Ramanuja Svami in his Gitabhāṣya explains *dharma* as means All other means of attaining to the Lord viz charity, austerity, penance, sacrifice, counting the beads, study of scriptures, etc. are not considered here, but the means viz. absolute unconditional surrender is considered as important

अधिष्ठान तथा कर्ता करण च पृथग्विधम् ।  
विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टाः दैवैर्वाच्यं पञ्चमम् ॥ १८-१४ ॥

I am confronted with the question which verse from the Gita impressed me the most, and it is indeed a very difficult question. The Gita indeed is an epitome of Hindu philosophy and scores of verses have become proverbial and are oft quoted. It is said that all the Upanisads are cows, the milkman is the Lord Krishna, the calf is Arjuna, who is fond of nectar and he drank this nectar in the form of the Gita

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दन ।  
पार्थो वत्स सुधीर्भोक्ता पपौ गीतामृतमहत् ॥

This verse shows how the Gita summarises the entire range of Indian philosophy based on Upanisads.

But all scholars of various philosophical schools have drawn upon the Gita to propound their own view-point. The Bhagavata school thinks that the Gita mainly teaches Saguna Bhakti, and they point out that Krishna while answering Arjuna has himself accepted that Devotion is an easier way of achieving Moksha. Lord Krishna Says, "The path of those whose mind is attached to the Imperceptible (i. e. absolute Brahman) is harder (than those of the worshippers of the perceptible i. e. Saguna Brahman) and it is followed by human beings with great difficulty."

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ (१२-५) ॥

On this ground, they prefer devotion to any other way to final emancipation and say that it is the main teaching of the Gita.

Another school claims that the Gita preaches renunciation, not only of fruit as has been popularly understood by the word कर्मयोग but that of entire action known as कर्मसंन्यास. ( They base their conclusion on a few lines like

निर्ममो निरहकारः समदुःखसुख क्षमी । (१२-१३)

अनिकेत स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नर । (१२-१९)

According to some, the Gita teaches Samkhya philosophy while others claim that it teaches Yoga philosophy But while trying to show that the Gita teaches only their philosophical thoughts, these scholars have ignored the warning given by Lord Krishna himself when He says, “Fools say that Samkhya ( Karma-Samnyasa ) and Yoga ( Karma-Yoga ) are different, the learned do not say so, if one path is properly followed the result of both is achieved.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्वाला प्रवदन्ति न पडिताः ।

एकमय्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ (५-४)

And in the following verse he declares that he who sees both these paths as identical is the person who has properly understood the true principle

यत्सांख्यै प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एक सांख्य च योग च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ (५-५)

The final goal according to Gita can be achieved by following the path of doing one's own duty with a detached mind without fostering a desire for a reward or fruit It matters little which school of philosophy one follows This attitude towards life was the main thing which the Gita wanted to teach. This is known as Karma-Yoga. Late Lokamanya Tilak has brought to notice that this is the quintessence of the teaching of the Gita, though occasionally it discusses other schools of philosophy The situation in which the Gita was narrated

and Arjuna's mood at that moment support his view, viz., Krishna wanted to inspire Arjuna to do his duty with a detached mind without any consideration of the result which was obviously not good for he had to kill his own kinsmen and the Gurus. Krishna wanted to persuade Arjuna by impressing upon his mind his duty with a complete idea about good and bad results, based on a philosophical discussion. To prepare Arjuna for this difficult job Lord Krishna in II-47 tells him that his authority extends to the performance of action, the fruit is never within his authority, so Arjuna should neither have a desire for a particular fruit nor he should exempt himself from doing his own duty. This verse thus contains the essence of Karma-Yoga and is not an advice from Krishna to Arjuna alone but it is a permanent guide for every individual whenever he is bewildered and does not know what to do.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन । (2-47)

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

Hamlet's tragedy is the result of the absence of any such advice which would have preached him to do his own duty without the least consideration of its result. Arjuna could save himself from the critical situation because he listened to the advice of Krishna to follow Karma-Yoga. The entire discussion of philosophy is to train his mind to become a Karmayogi. This advice of Krishna can be followed by everybody in everyday life and it is useful for all times to come.

The above verse emphasises that we are masters of action only and we are not to think of the fruit. But it does not mean that we should neglect the fruit of our action. Human activity is always inspired by a desire for its reward and it is said that even a fool would not be tempted to work without any motive.

प्रयोजनमनुद्दिश्य न मन्दोऽपि प्रवर्तते ।

If it is true that even a fool or the dullest person would not act without a reward it is but natural that intelligent men would act for a reward. And in this context and especially in the present age one would feel that the advice given by Krishna in the aforesaid verse is an advice without content or least in the present age. But it is not so. Karma-Yoga can be followed

by all of us even after any kind of advancement of science if we think of the correct reason why Karma-Yoga should be followed as has been discussed in the 14th verse of Adhyaya 18 where five different causes culminating into the result of one's action are given. This verse impresses me the most as it is the keynote for practising Karma-Yoga. The verse is :

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक् चेष्टा दैव चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ (१८-१४)

The five causes described above are ( i ) The place of action, ( ii ) The person who acts, ( iii ) the instrument with which he acts, ( iv ) other elements and activities that help him and finally, ( v ) destiny.

If these causes are not taken into account there is a danger of one giving too much importance to one or the other of causes. If he considers that the Karta or the agent is the most important factor he would attribute the entire credit of success to his personal merit and ignore other factors and would say,

असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।

ईश्वरोऽहमहं भोगी सिद्धोऽहं बलवान्सुखी ॥ ( १६-१४ )

which meant that whatever success he achieves is the result of his valour and wise men should always depend upon their valour alone. And at the same time such person may say that the brave should not take into account fate or destiny for it is only a solace for the weak in times of difficulty.

This attitude breeds arrogance and the person supposes himself as the Lord and says,

“ I am the lord, I ( alone ) am enjoyer, I am perfect, powerful and happy and there is nobody who is my match ”

This attitude towards life called as आसुरी संपत् by the Gita may be justified on the part a person during the days of prosperity but the moment he is confronted with a failure he has not the courage to face it. The reason for the lack of courage lies in his indifference towards the simple fact that many causes mentioned in the verse above jointly operate in producing the result; and his failure may be a result of one of them. It is possible that that is beyond his control. It is possible that destiny, the fifth cause might have conspired against him. If this fifth perceptible

factor is not forgotten, success would not intoxicate nor failure dishearten him.

This equilibrium of mind is achieved with penance by controlling the senses and mind and such person is called *जिदेन्द्रिय* and *मनस्वी*. Even in case of a staunch devotee this stage is achieved by transferring the responsibility of any action to God, and he can stand any result good or bad with a calm mind. These two kinds of persons following different paths achieve the same serenity of mind and hence description of both Samkhya or Yoga in the Gita is identical. When once this stage of mind is achieved one wins over passion and anger and can follow Karma-Yoga with a steady mind. But this state of mind is very difficult to achieve by penance and hence styled by Krishna as a difficult way. But the easier way he has given us viz complete faith in God and transferring the responsibility to God has now become the most difficult way to achieve the equilibrium of mind. In this age of advance in science the values of life and faith have changed and the aforesaid way may be thought by many as a lame excuse, and there is every possibility of their thinking that the advice of the Gita is not applicable in the present days and one is likely to ignore it as is many times done at present. But to me the aforesaid verse rightly speaks of the preaching of the Gita for the common man. He should, therefore, take into account that the desired fruit is not the result of one's own action alone, but is a result of combination of several causes, one of which is entirely beyond our control and is imperceptible. We may call it fate, accident or God's Will, call it anything but never forget its existence.

The story of a young girl who topped the list of successful candidates in the S. S. C. examination in one year would bear this out. She stood first among hundred thousand candidates and she could have boasted as "who can compete me". But she declared that her grand success was due partly to her destiny as her colleague who had invariably surpassed her in previous examinations fell ill a short time before the examination.

The story of Mohamad the Prophet who was saved of his life by the spider's web knit by the insect just after he concealed

himself in the cave also bears out that destiny is a factor which must not be forgotten. Destiny, however, is not the only factor which determines the result and we would not be justified in leaving things to fate thereby neglecting our duties. Therefore, duty must be done after full consideration of all this and hence without consideration of the fruit.

The verse, therefore, impressed me the most as a guide for the common man in his struggle in life so that he may adopt a philosophical attitude and face the facts boldly.

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ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।  
 भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ १८-६१ ॥  
 तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।  
 तत्प्रसादात्परा शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ १८-६२ ॥

Every verse of the Bhagawadgita has its own significance and to delete any one of them creates a gap. That portion of the Gita would appeal to us which best suits our bent of mind. The Bhagawadgita which embodies a universal message of peace and provides the only hope for the afflicted mankind is a reservoir of philosophical and religious gems that stand unparalleled and like Sindbad the sailor one does not know which to pick up and which to omit; for all are equally inviting. That a particular verse is chosen does not mean that other verses are less worthy. One's temperament, training, ideals, one's environment, in a word, one's station in life contributes to one's appreciating a particular verse most. The verses which appeal to me most are quoted above.

They mean "God dwells in the hearts of all beings, O, Arjuna, causing them to revolve by his mysterious power, as though they were mounted on a machine. Flee unto Him alone for shelter with all thy soul. By his grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace and everlasting abode."

These verses besides containing profound metaphysical, ethical and religious truths brought out in a succinct form, exhort

us to surrender ourselves to the will of God culminating in a divine assurance that by His abounding grace we will attain to peace that abides permanently. Let me make this statement more clear by entering into a detailed analysis of the metaphysical, ethical, and religious aspects of these verses.

We will at the outset discuss the Gita-teaching that God or Ishvara resides in the hearts of all beings. For that purpose we shall try to understand the nature of the universe itself. The universe we take to be a hierarchy where all qualities are arranged from minimum to maximum. In the order of the universe there are scales of all qualities so that at one end of a particular scale we have that quality at its minimum and at the other at its maximum. In fact the two extremities where the minimum and the maximum are situated are away from our sight because what we experience is always manifest-in-the-middle ( व्यक्तमध्य ) with both the ends gradually receding into the unmanifest ( अव्यक्त ) The mathematical meeting place of them both is one and the same for they meet only at Infinity. At Infinity any quality on the scale is no longer traceable for in becoming Infinity it has ceased to be a quality. Qualities and relations have their sway only in the empirical world and the Absolute is free from all qualities and relations. It is an accepted truth in the Absolutistic metaphysics that the Absolute is not to be identified with God. Where then in the above mentioned hierarchy will God be found ? God is found at one of the two ends of the series and is one degree remote from the Absolute. Even to say that God is one degree removed from the Absolute is an artificial way of putting things for the universe being a continuous series abhors any spatial or temporal gap between God and Absolute. Thus in God we find maximum truth, maximum goodness and maximum beauty, in a word, maximum of all values. This is Ishvara or Saguna Brahman and it is with reference to this that God is found in the heart of every being. God and all other things are situated on the same scale be it of truth, goodness or beauty or any other conceivable quality; He representing the maximum quantity of that quality and the things standing for the intermediary links. And thus God is present in everything for a common quality runs through God

and beings. However little amount of that quality a thing may have it still finds its place in the series and thus God and all beings are irrevokably linked up.

Again God is immanent in all existence. Just as a string which runs through a necklace brings together a multitude of pearls and the whole thus formed results in a beautiful symmetry, God brings harmony to bear upon the bewildering variety and multiplicity of things so that the whole system presents a wonderful coherence where everything has its own appointed place. But the impression that is given is not that of independent parts bound together by an extraneous principle, God, who remains outside the system as a disinterested relator. Had it been so the picture of the world would still have been a coherent whole with God standing face to face with this coherent system. But here as God stands outside the system the coherence would not yet be ultimate. On the contrary, since God as a *vinculum substantiale* is really Himself the underlying or cohering principle, this should be taken as the highest form of coherence. Just as an individual flower in virtue of its peculiar position cannot 'comprehend' the whole garland but the Sutra being the unifying principle would 'comprehend' it; so too the individuals in the coherent whole cannot know the ultimate coherence which for them is opaque and cannot be seen through while God, Himself the cohering principle and self-conscious being knows that ultimate coherence which for Him and for Him alone becomes 'transparent'. The ultimate coherence is opaque for the individuals as they cannot know it being themselves parts of that system. But were they to be torn away from the system they might know it as the other (and here coherence ceases to be ultimate at the emergence of this duality) in the same fashion as a cosmonaut knows the earth as the other from his spaceship which view is forbidden to him when he is on the earth forming a part of it.

Ishvara resides in the heart of everything. He is the essence of everything, the inner energising principle or the *natura naturans*. We can, therefore, say that God is everywhere and in Leibnitzian language there is no empty space where God is not.

We shall now turn our attention to the ethical truths embodied in the verses we have chosen. God is here described as revolv-

ing the machine on which all beings are mounted. This He does by wielding his power. The word which is used for power is Maya indicating its mysterious or inscrutable nature. Now power can be assigned to God only as He is Saguna. Again revolving others is a kind of relation and involves the one who revolves and the one who is revolved; and only Saguna Ishvara can enter into relations.

Here the whole and sole activity seems to be assigned, by the word भ्रामयन् to God and the beings are helplessly revolved. They are passive creatures and cannot go against the will of God. He is omnipotent and Himself does everything, while man is merely an instrument ( निमित्तमात्र ). As expressed beautifully, we are a pencil in the hands of the divine writer or the flute of the divine musician. In the words of Otto, the God of the Bhagawadgita is a God of pre-destination. He has already willed the future and the whole arena of our activity exhibits a cosmic puppet show with the strings pulled by that divine Sutradhara. He has complete foreknowledge of the events to come. Numerous instances are strewn in the Mahabharata to emphasise that things are predestined. Thus we find many a character giving vent to this conviction e. g. Shalya, for his having been compelled to join Duryodhana consoles Yudhishtira by saying that the Pandavas were sure to win and the Kauravas doomed to destruction; for who can prevent or alter the course ordained by fate? Again do not Krishna's words of assurance to Draupadi testify to the theory of predestination? Krishna says: My words shall stand though any impossibility were to come true. The great catastrophe of the Kuru war would not be averted because Destiny has worked itself out in spite of human effort.

This kind of determinism which we may well term divine determinism denies all freedom to a man. But we can understand divine determinism in quite a different sense. By postponing for a while the discussion of individual's freedom we will first note the meaning of the concept of determinism. That an action is determined means it is a result of the heredity and the environment of a person. All objects capable of being thought of can be satisfactorily classified into these two. They fall into the category of his hereditary equipment or the environmental influences

in which the individual lives, moves and breathes his last. Thus an action is a joint product of heredity and environment, the qualities received by way of heritage and an environment of some kind or other where the operations take place

Now यन्त्रारूढानि means mounted on a machine. This can well be compared with our hereditary equipment. Any machine has got to be operated in some environment and if God is revolving the machine He is the environmental influence. That is the same thing as to say that the machine of our heredity is working in the divine environment. But the verse teaches that God is revolving the machine and this environment is so powerful that we should better talk of divine determinism than divine environment. Again theoretically though there are infinite ways of reaching Brahman, the Gita upholds the moral path. The moral path leads us towards the moral ideal. Now God constitutes this ideal as we have already seen that it is in God that the Good is situated. To be moral means going nearer the moral ideal or approximating God. Our moral actions are directed towards God-realisation, they are determined by that ideal. This is another way of saying that there is divine determinism

Coming to our topic of individual's freedom we see that the view we take of the universe hierarchises all things, consequently hierarchising freedom also and thus yielding degree of freedom. The highest freedom is in God and the more any man approximates God the more free he becomes. We are in the process of surrendering empirical freedom for the real freedom. Empirical freedom enables us to choose our environment whether political, social, cultural or any other. But this is freedom only by sufferance as compared with the real freedom found in God. All our endeavour is directed to be really free by being in tune with God. We are familiar with the celebrated prayer which describes God as inspiring all our actions including sensory and motor ones. In this our will becomes God's will and this is the consummation of ethics. Here, like asymptotes meeting in Infinity the distance between the two expressions यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु—which grants freedom to the individual—and करिष्ये वचन तव—where that individual freedom is surrendered to God disappears and they coincide. At this stage the waters of ethics mingle with the already formed confluence of

epistemology and metaphysics. In God, the highest Truth, real essence and Supreme Goodness meet

Thus far theoretical ethics. Practical ethics which is realisation of this triune unity devises ways and means for that. This leads us to the realm of religion. The supreme teaching of the verses in this connection is to resign ourselves to the will of God. He is the ultimate refuge and so with one-pointed and unswerving devotion we have to submit to Him. Self-surrender (प्रपत्ति or शरणागति) constitutes the chief plank on which all devotional philosophy is constructed. This प्रपत्ति is described as having six characteristics : a firm resolve to accept only those things which are conducive to God-realisation, avoidance of those which come in its way, ardent faith that He is the Protector, and consequently acceptance of Him alone as the ultimate refuge, complete self-surrender to Him and a sense of helplessness. Here a devotee is gradually purged of all traces of individuality. In Kantian terminology this is Good Will where the will though still subject to the solicitations of the flesh rarely falls a prey to them. As he advances his love towards God becomes so all-absorbing that it is rightly termed पराभक्ति or अद्वैतभक्ति by attaining to which he reaches the stage of Holy Will where the will is no longer subject to the weaknesses of flesh. The नारदभक्तिसूत्रs express the same idea in exquisite terms. He becomes veritably immortal, there is 'simultaneous and complete fruition' of all his desires, and so grieves for nothing. He transcends all pairs of opposites and becomes the moral standard for he then is the perfect embodiment of the Categorical Imperative. He attains to supreme bliss. This he cannot achieve by self-effort alone but stands in need of God's grace which is showered on those whom he 'elects'. The Gita proceeds further to point out that after this the devotee forthwith enters the Absolute. There is no return from it for that is his permanent abode शाश्वतस्थानम्.

In short, these two verses teach us to realise the cardinal values viz : epistemologically to attain to transparent coherence, metaphysically to become one with God, ethically, to become His will and from the point of view of religion realise this trinity here and now.

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।  
 कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥ ६-४६ ॥  
 योगिनामपि सर्वेषा मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।  
 श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मा स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ ६-४७ ॥

To my mind these two verses are the most important ones in the Gita as they give in a nutshell the gist of the preaching of the Gita.

The literal meaning of the verses is :

1. Oh, Arjuna, be thou a 'Yogi' as he is greater than the ascetics (persons observing austerities of body, speech and mind) greater even than the learned or wise and also greater than the devotees who worship God by Vaidic Karmas or rites.
- 2 Of the Yogis, in my opinion, the greatest is he who has faith and love and who worships me with his inner self merged in me

In these verses the Lord advises Arjuna to be the best among the Yogis.

In order to understand the purport of these verses one must know the meaning of the word 'Yogi'.

A Yogi is one who practises 'Yoga'. But what is meant by 'Yoga'? It may be remembered that the word Yoga is used in more than hundred verses in the Gita.

Its etymological meaning is "that which joins", यज् to

join. That which joins man with God is 'Yoga'. Thus Karma-yoga, Jnanayoga, Bhakti yoga and Dhyanayoga are the four paths that lead men to God. But the word Yoga is defined in verse 48 of Discourse 2 as समत्वं योग उच्यते. Evenness of mind is called Yoga—Equilibrium is Yoga.

In verse 33 of Discourse 6 Arjuna says, योऽय योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन i. e. the Yoga of equanimity or evenness taught by you. Some say that the word is defined in verse 50 of Discourse 2 as योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् i. e. skill in action is Yoga. In my opinion the expression means 'Evenness in action is skill.' कर्मसु योगः कौशलम्. The former interpretation is redundant as the word is already defined in verse 48 of Discourse 2 as mentioned above.

The next point to be considered is what kind of Yogi does the Lord want Arjuna to be. In the 1st verse selected by me as the most important one, the Lord states that a Yogi is greater than a Dhyanayogi, he is even greater than a Jnanayogi and also greater than a Bhaktiyogi. The Yogi meant is therefore the Karma-yogi.

This inference is supported by verse 48 of Discourse 2. It begins with the words योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि 'Do perform actions by-being steadfast in Yoga' Again in verse 47 of Discourse 2 the Lord tells Arjuna that he must not attach himself to 'inaction' मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि. Again in verse 19 of Discourse 3 the Lord enjoins Arjuna "Always perform action without attachment तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ॥"

Thus a Yogi according to the Gita is a Karmayogi i. e. one who practises Karmayoga which is declared to be superior to Karma-Sannyasa in verse 2 of Discourse 5. तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात् कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते 'Yoga of action is superior to renunciation of action.'

In fact, the Gita teaches कर्मसु संन्यास Renunciation while performing actions and not कर्मणाम् संन्यासः Renunciation of actions. What is to be renounced is egoism, the idea that "I am the doer" and also the desire to get the fruits of the actions.

Again the Lord states "Do perform your bounden duty for action is better than inaction and none can live without doing anything.



नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।  
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धचेदकर्मणः ॥ ( ३-८ )

The next question is what is meant by bounden duty ? The Lord has given out in verse 41 of Discourse 18 that the duties of different persons are determined by their inborn qualities.

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशा शूद्राणां च परतप ।  
कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥ ( १८-४१ )

and Then the Lord tells Arjuna that his inborn nature will compel him to do what he thinks he would not do out of egoism His resolve not to fight would be futile.

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।  
मिथ्यैर्षं व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वा नियोक्ष्यति ॥ ( १८-५९ )

A Yogi says the Lord is not affected by the works done by him as he identifies his self with the self of All by conquering his senses.

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।  
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ( ५-७ )

Again the Lord on one occasion asserts that the Karma-yogi whose mind is perfectly balanced secures emancipation from births and deaths as he rests in Brahma which is spotless and equal

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थित मनः ।  
निर्दोष हि सम ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ ( ५-१९ )

The 2nd verse insists upon complete devotion to God and absorption of the mind in God A Yogi who thus raises his existence to the Divine Being, who unifies his consciousness with His and who makes his fragmentary nature a reflection of His perfect nature is the Highest Yogi

A Yogi has not to flee from action but to do any work that falls to his lot by slaying the ego and while in action his soul must remain calm, still and free

In verse 21 of Discourse 5 the Lord declares that a Yogi not being attached to external contacts, finds his happiness in the self and gets everlasting happiness.

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत् सुखम् ।  
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ ( ५-२१ )

Keeping his mind balanced under all circumstances and even controlling his senses the Yogi attains peace culminating in Nirvana i. e. emancipation

It must, however, be remembered that a Yogi has not to give up food, sleep or play; nor is he to indulge too much in these. Every movement of his must be regulated.

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।  
न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ ( ६-१६ )  
युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।  
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ ( ६-१७ )

In short, a Yogi is अन्तस्त्यागी and बहिर्योगी i.e. outwardly he enjoys the pleasant contacts but inwardly he is attached to none. The Lord has therefore said :—

य सन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।  
न ह्यसन्यस्तसकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ ( ६-२ )

Yoga and Sannyasa are one He cannot become a Yogi who has not left off planning and scheming. The Lord further says :—

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।  
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ( ६-३२ )

The Yogi who realises that whatever is pleasure and pain to him is alike pleasure and pain to others, is considered to be the Highest Yogi. The Lord also describes such a Yogi in one of the verses :—

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।  
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ ( १२-२ )

In my opinion, the best Yogis are those who worship me by fixing their mind *always* in me, with supreme faith. With respect to worship the Lord says in the final Discourse .—

यत्. प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।  
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ ( १८-४६ )

A man attains perfection by worshipping, by the performance of his own duty, the supreme Being from whom all beings have

evolved and who pervades all the things in the world.

The Lord on ce more says in

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपसु चैव  
दानेषु यत् पुण्यफलं प्रतिष्ठम् ।  
अत्येति तत् सर्वमिदं विदित्वा  
योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ (८-२८)

A Yogi rises above all the meritorious fruits of (1) the study of the Vedas ( ज्ञानम् = learning or wisdom ) (2) sacrifices and gifts (कर्म = worship in accordance with Vaidic rites ) (3) austerities ( तप = Penance ) and thus he attains the supreme Primeval Abode.

Before concluding this essay, I may point out that the Lord has in three verses advised Arjuna to be a Yogi In verse 50 of Discourse 2 He says—

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।

Devote thyself to Yoga, as skillfulness lies in keeping equanimity of mind while performing actions. In verse 46 of Discourse 6 as stated above the Lord enjoins Arjuna to be a Yogi, तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ।

Therefore, be thou a Yogi and lastly in verse 27 of Discourse 8 the Lord insists upon Arjuna's being steadfast in Yoga at all times

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ।

Not only that but the Lord, Arjuna and also Sanjaya have declared in three verses that Yoga is *the theme* of the Gita. On one occasion the Lord says—

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ (४-३)

I have taught you, my devotee and friend, the same ancient Yoga which is the Supreme Secret.

Arjuna has said in verse 33 of Discourse 6 योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन । — The Yoga of equality or equanimity taught by you. Sanjaya has said the verse in

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद्गुह्यमहं परम् ।

योग योगेश्वरात् कृष्णात् साक्षात् कथयत स्वयम् ॥ (१८-७५)

By the grace of Vyasa, I have heard this Supreme and most secret Yoga revealed personally by Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga.

Last but not the least, the words—

ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसवादे

( Dialogues between Sri Krishna and Arjuna regarding practice of Yoga based upon knowledge of the Supreme Self pervading the whole universe ) repeated at the end of every Discourse more or less as a burden of the celestial song, lend support to the assertion that verse 46 of Discourse 6 gives in a nutshell the main preaching of the Gita as in it the Lord enjoins Arjuna to be a Yogi i.e. A man performing the duties cast upon him by birth, environment and natural propensities with a balanced mind without caring for success or failure, pleasure or pain, or gain or loss and as offerings to the Lord.

हरिः ॐ तत्सत् ।

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अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।  
 दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्व मार्दव ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ १६-२ ॥  
 तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।  
 भवन्ति सपदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ १६-३ ॥

The first three verses of the 16th chapter of Bhagawadgita enumerate 26 endowments of a person who is born with divine nature. I have selected from these verses the 2nd and 3rd for the purpose of this article

These two verses contain 17 endowments ( out of the 26 ), namely *Non-violence, Truth, Absence of Anger, Renunciation, Tranquility, Abstinence from calumny, Compassion to all creatures, Non-covetousness, Gentleness, Sense of shame in doing evil things, Absence of frivolity, Vigour, Forgiveness, Fortitude, Purity, Freedom from malice and Avoidance of excessive pride.*

The world today is mostly in the grip of unrighteous persons and organisations, and human values are at bay; corruption and various vices are rampant, wasteful and criminal tendencies are uppermost and a number of excuses have been invented to justify multifarious misdeeds. And this deplorable state of affairs can be easily noticed by a discerning eye at all levels—familial, social, national or international. Politicians and statesmen are no exceptions and they can and do manage to gain support of scientists and blessings of religious dignitaries to their covert and ever nefarious activities. There is no defender of faith, truth or justice

in this world; kingdom of heaven or of love and righteousness has been receding farther and farther from human expectations; callousness, cruelty, conflict and violence have not abated in the least; they have only changed their faces.

Humanity has been consequently groping tremblingly in dread and darkness, in unrest and uncertainty as it did about two thousand years ago. To root out the dread, to give the light, to tranquilise the mind and to assure humanity of physical and mental security is, in the first instance, not the work of men and women of ordinary calibre. Only those persons who are born with divine endowments or who have through patient effort developed these qualities will first do this work and none else. But once they start it, others will follow suit. And this is why I have, for this article, selected from the Bhagawadgita the two verses mentioned in the beginning.

I shall now discuss *seriatim* the 17 endowments of qualities which are incorporated in these verses.

1. *Non-Violence* : The principle of non-violence, whose ancient preceptors were the saints and sages like Mahavira, Buddha and Christ and whose modern advocates are Tolstoy and Gandhi, is a natural concomitant of love, the indestructible principle of life. Love is the cementing material between life and life and as such it eschews violence. Everything that exists has urge for freedom of action but the freedom is modified by a restraining force which is called love in relation to animate beings while it is termed attraction in the case of inanimate ones. So freedom of action tempered by love is the universal law or divine law of life as free movement controlled by attraction is the universal law of matter. In the last analysis life and matter are the same, for the universe consists of one substance, life and matter being simply two manifestations of its urge and their outward difference being only one of form and arrangement. And their laws are also fundamentally identical.

Love and non-violence together are like the two sides of a coin. There can be no divinity where there is no love or its complement, non-violence. And there will be no enduring peace and happiness for mankind until mankind has accepted love and non-violence as the way of life. Love and non-violence constitute what is called mutualism, and mutualism must be

practised to its maximum for highest possible attainment of individual and collective happiness. The universe, if it is to be called a machine, is an exceedingly beautiful and automatic machine and it can set itself right through continuous mutual actions of its various parts, that is, through love and non-violence. The saviour of humanity must be non-violent in thought, speech and action.

2. *Truth* (Truthfulness) : This is, like love, another indestructible principle of life. All else may fade and fail, but truth and love shall never. If, as some fear, they will perish, the whole world will perish, but in fact they never perish. Both the principles are most formidable things on this earth. Truthful character is the world's most precious value. It, like love, holds the field when everything else may give way. History testifies to this statement. The records of religious, social and political reformations and revolutions bear witness to the fact that it is only truth which brings to mankind real and lasting victory. The world will be finally and permanently delivered from unrest and unhappiness only by persons who stand for truth accompanied by love and non-violence.

3 & 4. *Absence of Anger*, and *Renunciation* : In order to attain to the highest degree of non-violence and truthfulness, the emancipator of mankind must forsake anger and accept renunciation or self-sacrifice as the guiding principles in all his undertakings. For anger (as the Bhagawadgita itself puts it) gives rise to bewilderment, bewilderment to amnesia (loss of memory), and amnesia to dementia (profound incapacity or destruction of intelligence). A person overpowered by anger becomes obviously blind to truth and is inclined to violence.

The liberator of humanity must hence, be free from anger. Similarly self-interest comes in the way of his right perception of things and perfect compassion to others. So he must renounce self-interest and accept the principle of self-sacrifice. Hot-tempered and selfish persons have been found to spoil a work in their hands, small or great, which would have borne, in the hands of peaceful and unselfish persons, great fruits.

5. *Tranquility* : A person who has freed himself from anger and self-interest possesses necessarily a tranquil temperament for he has demolished the very basis of perturbation.

Tranquility, serenity or calmness is a necessary adjunct to the balance of mind which every person who is righteous and aspires to bring lasting peace to humanity, must attain. He can acquire it only when he is in tune with the workings of the universe or reality. And the certainty that he is so attuned comes when both conscious and subconscious spheres of his life are harmonious with reality. All systems of religion and philosophy have been endeavouring to bring this integration to man.

6. *Abstinance from Calumny* · Calumny is an act of slander-ing, a false accusation. It has no basis of truth. It is a mental violence. Anger, selfishness, lack of sense of justice, disregard for truth, and misuse of leisure beget many times the attitude of calumny. But when the social and spiritual value of peaceful attitude, love of justice, regard for truth and right use of leisure are well understood, calumny finds no place in human behaviour. Justice and truthfulness are the glory of man and his civilisation and they are parents of peace and harmony. Calumny is antithetical to justice and truthfulness and, therefore, those who seek to attain divine life must totally abstain from it.

7. *Compassion to all Creatures* : This is sympathy with a desire to help others. It is manifestation of love, which is the sheet-anchor of infinite benevolence, goodwill and mercifulness that must exist between being and being, and from which emanates the whole edifice of righteousness.

There are, however, some persons in this world who are unable to bear the thought of sufferings and would therefore avoid the contact of sufferers and even try to forget the existence of those who suffer. But it is a different case with righteous persons. The cries of groaners and moaners and their appeals for assistance rouse compassion in the heart of righteous men and women and make them spring up and earnestly busy themselves in various acts of compassion. Compassion calls upon them to help all creatures though its ways are sometimes very steep and though it may occasionally crucify some of them; it demands of them that they shall willingly submit to the crucifixion and die joyfully for its fulfilment; and ultimately it crowns their mission with glory.

8, 9 & 10. *Non-Covetousness, Gentleness and Sense of Shame in doing evil things* : These three qualities are essential



for facilitation of the working of compassion just described. Besides those who hanker after possessions and are neither gentle in spirit nor have the qualm of conscience for their evil-doings will never be the vanguard of man's procession towards the kingdom of righteousness.

The long cherished kingdom of righteousness expects in an emphatic manner that its citizens will not be anxious to have more than they are entitled to, that they will be mild, kindly and patient towards each other and they will ever exhibit regard for propriety and decency in their relations with others and will never be a prey to any unmeritorious deeds

11. *Absence of Frivolity*: Thoughts that are not deep and nature that is not stable are in no way helpful to the development and the practice of the ten virtues discussed before and the six to be dealt with hereafter. Efforts must therefore be assiduously made to change one's frivolous tendencies before one can hope to attain enduring success in any field of life or in any undertaking

12 *Vigour*: It is physical and mental energy; it is the very soul of every human effort. It is necessary for developing the force of character.

A combination of vigour, stableness and fortitude (that will be described soon) ensures victory over difficulties that would be otherwise insuperable. In all the battles Napoleon successfully fought, he had infused in his soldiers a unique blend of unbounded energy, unfailing steadiness and undeterred courage. And what is true in the case of the battlefield is also true in that of every other field—moral, religious and spiritual.

To speak of vigour alone, it was the unlimited vigour of Vivekananda that spread the gospel of spirituality to every corner of the world; and it was immeasurable vigour of Christ and Gandhi that helped them to give the message of love and non-violence to the despised, down-trodden, hopeless and helpless individuals, communities and nations of the earth. The world is in need of vigorous or spirited persons who will stem the tide of evil forces and enthrone the forces of righteousness in the hearts of the people.

13. *Forgiveness*: It is an attitude opposite to chastisement. Those who understand the supreme place which love,

compassion, sympathy and non-violence occupy in the process of bettering human relations are disposed to forgive as if duty-bound. But those who are possessed by conceit and selfish motives are in general, inclined to chastise persons coming in their way of their material or non-material acquisitions. Some persons apparently having a forgiving demeanour exhibit occasionally lack of forgiveness, the exhibition posing as a righteous indignation. It is not suggested that wrong-doers should not be made in any way to understand the wrongfulness of their deeds. But the manner of doing it should not give rise to hateful reaction on the part of the wrong-doers. And if we possess the virtue of forgiveness and convince the persons concerned of their errors in a loving and persuasive manner, the reaction will also be one of love and repentance. Justice does not necessarily demand punishment. Justice and forgiveness can go together. They are not opposed to each other.

One who desires to become divine and to bring heaven to earth must be the very fountain of forgiveness. Forgiveness is an entrance to the home of love and divinity.

14. *Fortitude* : It is the real ally of the virtue described before as vigour. It is a calm and sustaining courage. It maintains man's energies and prepares him to quietly face danger, pain or any trouble.

Many acts of what is superficially considered courage may proceed from different impulses and motives. Such acts, as take place due to want of foresight and due consideration of the risks involved, or out of mere desire of glory or praise in this world or the next, or out of dread or ridicule or contempt of our fellows, or out of sudden indignation against brutal crimes are not the real acts of courage though they may apparently seem so and even serve some social purpose. But the acts that have their origin in thoughtful love, in a sense of justice or social duty or in the conviction that attainments, such as self-realisation can be reached only through resolute endurance go to the making of the courage which is implied by fortitude and which can be considered a divine endowment.

15. *Purity* : Purity of purpose, character and conduct heightens man's physical, mental and spiritual powers and enables him to enter higher levels of understanding and experi-

ence. If he is perfectly pure in his inner and outer life and remains steady in the higher atmosphere he has entered, he soon reaches an exalted spiritual experience which is undoubtedly his divine possession.

16. *Freedom From Malice* : A want of conceptions of higher life or interest creates a narrow outlook in our minds and makes room for ill-will, wicked intentions and a desire to harm others, we become ungenerous, malicious. But indulgence in malice brings us no gain; on the contrary we thereby incur the resentment of the victims of our ill-will and also the distrust and contempt of those who might first applaud us. Malice is a great obstacle to our spiritual and divine development which is needed for our individual uplift as well as for that of the community and consequently it deserves to be abandoned

17. *Avoidance of Excessive Pride* : In its extreme form pride is found to reside in persons disposed not to submit even to reasonable criticism or advice. It is an exaggerated self-respect. It is allied both to vanity and ambition and vanity makes man selfish and insincere. In respect of vanity pride rests on clothes, social position and various material or outward possessions; and in relation to ambition, it is fed and propped up by acquisition of power and its long successful exercise. Pride may take two forms, passive and active. The former is too much content with the thought that one possesses certain qualities or is satisfied with some admiration from others of these qualities. But the latter is after a resounding applause. Both are harmful (to a smaller or greater extent) to man's enduring progress towards spirituality and divinity. Freedom from pride as from malice helps man to sublimate his instincts and nature and prepares him for the attainment of the highest bliss

To sum up, these endowments of a man born with divine nature have their distinctive values, though of course all are complementary to one another, and they make the divinity in him. Obviously a person who is not so born will have to go through a strict discipline and a planned training in his childhood and youth for the acquisition of these divine qualities

There are at present a few persons in this world who are born with divine nature. But for everlasting peace and bliss

of mankind it is imperative that every man in future comes to birth as a divine being. And that is the dream of modern seers and sages like Vivekananda and Arubindo Ghosh and that is the mission which every lover of higher life must embark upon.

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नाह वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।  
 शक्य एवविधो द्रष्टु द्रष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ ११-५३ ॥  
 भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवविधोऽर्जुन  
 ज्ञातु द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परतप ॥ ११-५४ ॥

If the rest of the Gita is described as a dialogue, the eleventh chapter may well assume the proportions of a complete one act play staged in an open theatre. The scene begins by Arjuna profoundly thanking the Lord for favours already shown to him: ( Gita xi-1 to 4) " your mention of the supreme secret known as अध्यात्म, your detailed explanation of how creatures come into being and are dissolved,—and your enumeration of the forms of your greatness " He then makes an humble request to the Lord to show himself in his omnipresent form " if, O Lord of Yoga, you are of opinion that I am competent to see it." The Lord graciously agreed, but added "you will not be able to behold me with your ( physical ) eyes, and so, I shall furnish you with Divine Sight " ( xi-8 ) Sanjaya then gives a brief description of the glorious scenes spread out before the eyes of Arjuna (xi-9 to 13) who gives vent to the impressions made on his mind by the strange sights witnessed by him, full of glories and terrors, but at the end collapsed completely, confessing that he could not stand the strain any longer and requesting the Lord to resume his human form (xi-16 to 46). Sri Krishna agreed (xi-47 to 49) but explained that He was the Time-Spirit, responsible in the last resort for

the birth and death of all beings, all other so-called 'agents'—including fights on the battlefield—being no more than a token of that Spirit.

Arjuna feels completely helpless, abjectly apologises to the Lord for calling him by his familiar name 'friend Krishna' and prostrated himself. The Lord assured him that it had been a unique privilege and a favour conferred on him "even Gods had been denied that sight though they had eagerly longed for it" (xi-52).

"Neither by study of Vedas, nor by practising austerities, nor by performance of sacrifices can I be seen as you have succeeded in seeing Me. But by single-minded devotion (भक्ति) to Me, it may be possible to understand (ज्ञातुम्), to see (द्रष्टुम्) and enter into me (प्रवेष्टुम्)" xi-53 to 54.

These two verses in my opinion give a clue to the main theme of the Gita. This has been a controversial question, some holding the view that the Gita mainly teaches Yoga (some even restrict it to Karmayoga), others standing for jnana and still others supporting Bhakti. Readers and even commentators are partial to one or the other of these views and decide the question according to their personal inclinations. Some take the superficial view that the three paths ultimately mean the same thing or, even if they are different, the Gita teaches them all. We cannot, however, ignore the fact that the Gita has distinguished between them and the question arises whether the Gita views them in any order of preference. I think that the three infinitives mean Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti respectively and the Gita prefers them in this order, Bhakti being its highest teaching.

Before we study the use of these infinitives, we must be clear in our mind about the meaning of 'माम्' the common object of all the three. We shall be making a childish mistake if we interpret अह, माम्, मया, मम as referring to Sri Krishna with the decorations in his four hands and the Crown on his head. Even Arjuna accepted this image as the second best, merely because he had no stomach for the reality behind the image. There is no doubt that the first personal pronoun, with its nominative, accusative, instrumental and possessive cases, plays a dominant part in the structure of the Gita. It is repeated at least 250 times and not more than 50

of them can refer to Krishna in the human form. The Gita begins to explain the meaning of this pronoun in the 7th Chapter — the opening verses leave us in no doubt about it; the various facets of माम् are brought out in subsequent chapters ; and the Gita concludes by glorifying Him. The teaching about Him is named गुह्य or secret; the verse summarising that teaching at the end of chapter ix is repeated in chapter xviii as गुह्यतर, गुह्यतम, greater and greatest secret

The Gita sharply distinguishes Him from ब्रह्म or तत्. Not that ब्रह्म cannot be made our supreme guiding principle in life, but the Gita has no doubt that अहम् makes the teaching easier to understand. ब्रह्म no doubt is the ultimate essence, the Absolute underlying all relative beings, the supreme energy that activates all that is living. But the difficulty is that Brahman is completely unmanifest and our minds in their normal working are unable to conceive either its creativity or its ways of operation or indeed its relation to the manifested world. These difficulties, are considerably reduced if we substitute Him for Brahman. Taking a survey of the descriptions of the Lord, we see He is named पर पुरुषः (viii-22), (xiii-22) उत्तमः पुरुष (xv-17) or पुरुषोत्तमः (xv-16, 19, viii-1, x-15). He is ultimately grounded in अक्षर or अव्यक्त ब्रह्म (viii-21) which is His ultimate home. Unlike अक्षर however, he is endowed which in its capacity as जीव (active consciousness) sustains with परा प्रकृति the universe (vii-5) and gives meaning to the presentations of the sense organs (xv-7, 8) and is responsible for our physical and mental activities (xv-14, 15)

As पुरुषोत्तम has the benefit of परा प्रकृति, a link is established between Him and the world, the world is operated directly by प्रकृति and indirectly and unobtrusively by पुरुष. This relation is explained at some length in the 13th chapter. Brahman, the ultimate principle is described as ज्ञेयम् in verses 12-17. The relation between प्रकृति and पुरुष is explained in verses 19-22. Earlier in the chapter, He is styled क्षेत्रज्ञ, the physical world being his क्षेत्र and the relation between the two being that of the knower and the known, the subject and the object. He is called महेश्वर (xiii-22) short form of भूतमहेश्वर (ix-11). In this capacity he comes very near usurping the place of प्रकृति as ईश्वर is described as 'seated in the heart of all beings, and turning them round as though mounted on a

machine (xiii-61). He is also styled as परमात्मा (xv-17, xiii-22). There is a great temptation to interpret परमात्मा as a world-soul and contrast it with जीवात्मा as the individual soul. The Gita, however, does not support this view. In vi-7 and more explicitly in xiii-31, 32 परमात्मा has been explained as आत्मा that dwells in the body. On similar reasoning पुरुषोत्तम has been styled परमात्मा in xv-17 because, "having entered the three worlds He sustains them, as the regulator, Himself remaining indestructible". The Gita is thus at pains to establish direct relation between the ultimate principle and the visible world by successively turning that Principle into क्षेत्रज्ञ, परमात्मा, पुरुषोत्तम, परमेश्वर. The Gita therefore aims at proving two things :— Firstly it is better and easier to deal with Purusottama than with Brahman, with its manifest working than with the unmanifest. Secondly as between the attitudes to Purusottama conveyed by the three gerunds, द्रष्टुम् is better than ज्ञातुम् and प्रवेष्टुम् is better than both. We shall provisionally translate the gerunds thus : ज्ञातुम् as understanding the implications of the Spirit; द्रष्टुम् as insight into or the direct feel of the Spirit, and प्रवेष्टुम् as entering into or being in communion with the Spirit. We think that these three attitudes correspond to what Gita calls Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti. We shall see how the Gita prefers the latter of these attitudes to the earlier.

The only available path for reaching the unmanifest Brahman is ज्ञान. As it is unmanifest, no question arises of our 'seeing' it or 'entering' into it. It is only a ज्ञेय (xiii-12) "almost undistinguishable from ज्ञान, any way approachable only by ज्ञान" (xiii-17). The description of ज्ञेय given in xiii-12-17 appears full of paradoxes, because our mind thinks in opposites which it cannot recombine except verbally. Only a ज्ञानी can instruct us in this kind of ज्ञान through 'discipleship, discussion and service' (vi-34). The pupil then becomes ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः (v-19-20); becomes Brahman itself (v-24) and attains ब्रह्मनिर्वाण (v-24-25). A comprehensive description of the distinctive attainments of ज्ञान is given in viii-7,11. In chapter 4, it is stated that ज्ञान attains supreme peace, perfect balance and eternal joy.

The ज्ञान of Purusottama given by the Gita is 'accompanied by विज्ञान (vii-2) It comprises an account of His 'birth and function' (जन्म, कर्म). The brief account given in iv-6,13 is



expanded in Chaps. 7, 8 and 10 "He is unborn, but, poised on his own प्रकृति he comes into being by his own माया (iv-6)". "When unrighteousness raises its (ugly) head, He establishes righteousness in age after age (iv-7)". He is also responsible for चातुर्वर्ण्य divided, (not on the basis of birth), but of गुण and कर्म (iv-13). The obscure points in the description are explained in Chap 13 at Arjuna's request and the concept of Purusottama is consolidated in Chap 15. The practical bearings of the concept are elaborated in Chap 14 to 18. This Purusottama, not Brahman, is the hero of the Gita.

It needs a close study to identify द्रष्टुम् with Yoga. It may be noticed that all references to Yoga in the Gita are contained in Chaps 2 to 6 and 11, all other chapters being concerned with the exposition of Purusottama. It is not an accident that the use of दृश् and पश्य is almost wholly confined to the former set of chapters. The following Yogas are mentioned in the Gita (1) Buddhiyoga (ii-50,53) which leads to the status of स्थितप्रज्ञ who, having *seen* the supreme, turns away not only from desire but even the relish at the back of desire (ii-59) and for whom, "as for a *seeing* sage that is night in which others are wide awake" (ii-69) (ii) Karmayoga to which the whole of the chapter 3 and part of 4 relates. It first describes the kind of actions that are permitted in this Yoga, namely, not अकर्म or cessation of Karma but असक्त कर्म when we *see* inaction in action and action in inaction. (iv-18), Karma for लोकसंग्रह, Karma which is not claimed as his by the agent but is the resultant of the Gunas. These actions are raised to the status of Yoga when (a) "on knowing ME you will *see* all beings without exception in Atman and thus in Me" (iv-35), (b) when acts are done as a sacrifice to the Divine, (c) are surrendered to Him or to Brahman, (d) when desire is subordinated to Him who is higher than बुद्धि (iii) आत्मनः योगः (vi-12, 15, 19) in which Atma is to be raised, not allowed to step down, to be befriended, and conquered if hostile. The steps of this Yoga are given in minute detail : (a) योगमारब्धु (vi-6) by performing असक्त कर्म (b) योगारूढ vi-4 6 by practising शम or suppression of hostile forces (c) युक्त vi-7, 8, 9 by attaining evenness of temper, (d) योगी vi-15, through ध्यान attains even-mindedness both in pleasure and distress, attains freedom from pain, and equal regard for all beings "The Yogi

sees Me everywhere and everything in ME ” (vi-29) (e) परमयोगी who in the image of the Atman, *sees* equality everywhere, whether in pain or pleasure (vi-32). (iv) ऐश्वर योग ix-5; xi-8. There can be no doubt about the connection of this Yoga with द्रष्टुम्. It is styled विश्वरूपदर्शन and a display of ऐश्वर रूप. Arjuna addresses the Lord as योगेश्वर, asks for दर्शन and when the expanse of the universe is spread before him, he is taken up with the wonderful sights, glorious as well as terrible. It must be remembered that these sights were not visible to physical eyes and Arjuna had to be endowed temporarily with Divine Sight. Traditionally also, Divine truths are seen with a ‘ third eye ’ which can mean mental eye or insight. It may be at once conceded that ज्ञान and भक्ति as properly understood do imply insight also, that is why we use such expressions as ज्ञानयोग and भक्तियोग. It may be noted that these terms are used only once in the Gita : ज्ञानयोग in vii-3; and भक्तियोग in xiv-26.

योग preferred to ज्ञान . We shall now turn to the comparison between Jnana and Yoga. The argument is that both are equally effective but Yoga is easier. “ It is childish, not a sign of mature intellect, to speak of Jnana and Yoga as different disciplines; whoever stays in either will get the fruit of both. Both attain the same status, and he who *sees* them as one sees truly. (v. 4,5). The Gita elaborates this in the following verses. A Yogi is not attached to his actions, is as untouched by them as a lotus-leaf by water; is not bound by his actions and hence attains permanently stable peace. ( v. 7-15 ) Similarly ज्ञानी destroys ignorance, throws light on the supreme It, and looking upon all with an equal eye the ज्ञानी attains stable happiness (v-16-21). Again ज्ञान leads to कर्मसंन्यास while Yoga leads to असक्त कर्म the latter is both a Yogi and Sannyasi; for without संन्यास of thought, nobody can ever become a Yogi ( vi-1,2 )

These arguments raise the status of the Yogi to that of a Sannyasi or ज्ञानी whose greatness is taken for granted. The following note of dissent therefore gains weight in favour of Yoga “ Though all this is true, संन्यास without Yoga is hard to attain; while a sage joined to Yoga attains Brahman *in no time* (v-6). The Yogi attains ब्रह्मसंस्पर्श and the resulting happiness *with ease* (vi-28 ). Again in chapter 12, Arjuna poses the question: “ Who understands Yoga better, he who worships You, or worships the Unmanifest ? ” and the Lord unhesitatingly decides in favour of the

former “ He who worships the unmanifest attains Me, no doubt; but his sufferings are greater path of the unmanifest is too arduous for those who have the handicap of the physical body” (xii-3-7). Once again ज्ञान ( of ब्रह्म is imparted by the truth-seers iv-34 ) while he who has perfected Yoga will in time acquire it of *his own accord* ( iv-38 )

भक्ति . We now come to Bhakti This topic has been treated in chapter 12 and the concluding section of chapter 17 Two points have been made out . (1) preference for Bhakti over Yoga and Jnana, because Bhakti is the culmination of all paths and is easier than others (ii) the meaning of Bhakti and its identification with प्रवेष्टुम्

भक्ति and योग : The difficulties of Yoga are stressed at the end of chapter 6 Arjuna there raised two fundamental objections (1) Our mind being fickle, cannot develop the required steadiness of Yoga The lord could give no better assurance than that steadiness can come by practice. (ii) If one fails in Yoga, one will be left in the lurch like त्रिशकु suspended in mid-air. The Lord again assured that effort in the right direction will never be wasted and the frustrated Yogi may have an advantage in the next birth In the 11th chapter Arjuna was given the rare privilege of direct contact with the Divine but he was so frightened that he would never try again The immediate view of Yoga was frightening and Bhakti expects it to be replaced by the long-term or all time view.

ज्ञान and योग : As for Jnana, the opening verses of chapter 12 state the subject matter of Jnana to be “ the indestructible, the unmanifest, omnipotent, unchanging, immutable and eternal ”. Similarly, in xviii-50,53 the state of the ज्ञानी's mind is described and we are told that he ultimately comes to Me “ He becomes fit for my Bhakti; knows Me in essence, who and how great I am and enters into ME ”

This confirms the description प्रवेष्टुम् in chapter 11

“ Entering ” implies transcending the relation between the observer and observed, between the subject and object, or being in complete communion with the universe which is the manifested form of the Supreme In the attitudes of ज्ञान and योग the thinker and observer regard themselves as standing out of the world This we can see is a wrong pose for the simple reason that the observer

is patently a part and parcel of the universe. Some easier forms of Bhakti are mentioned in xii-9,12 and again and again the Lord has declared the भक्त as his favourite. The key verse of Bhakti in Chapter 9 is paraphrased in xii-8 and repeated in xviii-68 and the heart of Bhakti is reached when we completely surrender to Him. The Lord ends the discourse by assuring his Bhaktas that He will never fail them.

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समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रिय ।  
 ये भजन्ति तु मा भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ ९-२९ ॥  
 अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।  
 साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ९-३० ॥  
 क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।  
 कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ९-३१ ॥

“ O Lord ! Have you no words of comfort for the lowliest and lost like me ? You have showered Your boundless grace for ever on Your pious and righteous children You have disclosed to them without reservation the secrets of Your heart You have promised them Your blissful and eternal company. The lives of all the saints bear abundant testimony to the fulfilment of Your promise But are Your doors closed for the sinners like me ? Are Your straying children to miss forever Your guiding finger ? Are those lust-blinded, passion-misled wretches denied Your kindly light for ever ? Am I not Yours ? Would You not ever favour me with Your grace ? ”

In these and similar other words I used to appeal to the Lord every now and then. My faith in Him was firm and unswerving and my devotion to Him was kindled by love Later on I came to realise my weaknesses I was too weak to stand by the right and too feeble to resist temptations and sinful acts

From my childhood I was brought up in the faith that purity of thought and action were the sole and essential founda-

tion on which the palace of all the penance could be constructed. I was also taught to believe that prayers and penance, devotion and faith would all remain unresponded and would achieve nothing unless the *Sādhaka* is pure in his thoughts, words and deeds. All religious books and teachings had presented to me the same thought. The same ideas were being preached by all religious heads and the various mythological stories illustrated the same truth. All of them emphasized that Lord's Grace is not bestowed upon a devotee unless he is crystal-like pure in everything he says and does.

These demands were so insistent and so rigorous that I felt disheartened. The required essential virtues were too difficult for me to acquire and retain. Though the spirit was yearning, the flesh was weak. I felt that the realisation of the Divine was not at all possible for a person like me, who was always led astray by the worldly pleasures. I became disappointed and disheartened. The great gap between aspirations and achievements wrought pangs in my heart. Nevertheless, my firm faith in and sincere devotion to the Lord did not wane or wither. He was in my eyes all love, all mercy and all kindness, despite my faults, failings and handicaps. This sustained my faith in prayers. I continued to pray to God and daily besought His mercy with tears in my eyes. At times when my patience was at its ebb I argued with Him in several ways and teased Him, asking Him why He was not merciful to me.

To atone for my sins and misdeeds, I used to inflict upon myself physical punishment. I used to dash my head on the ground and at His feet. I fasted for days on end. I wanted a short-cut to Lord's Grace. I had also a notion that tormenting the body was the way to the elevation of the soul. Moreover I wanted to get over all that was base in man. This was going against my natural tendencies. This effort had thus its natural reaction. I fell sick. My strong body crumbled but my desires remained unaffected and unabated. The more I tried to control my desires the more they struck root in the heart; I then realised, in this respect human efforts were of no value without His grace. In short I started feeling as if I was wandering in a dark night in an unknown jungle, without any hope of help or light from anywhere. Ultimately I surrendered myself to him and cried "O God ! why

have You no pity on me ? Please be kind enough and forgive me all the sinful acts and weaknesses. Lord, this is not impossible for You as You are Omnipotent. You are all love, all mercy and all kindness. You are Omniscient. You know the pangs of my heart. You know whether my devotion is genuine. O Lord ! I have realised that without Your wish all my efforts will bring more and more of grief. Your favour only will lead me to eternal happiness. Please have pity on me and let me have a ray of hope from You ”.

Days passed, and my earnest appeals continued. Suddenly on one day the Grace of the Lord dawned upon me in the shape of Sri Keshadatta Maharaj. He loved and fondled me with affection, greater than any mother would have for her beloved child. Light came from him and the three verses from the Celestial Song ‘ Sri Bhagawadgita ’ flashed before me. It was an answer to my ever questioning mind. These verses are quoted below :—

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रिय ।  
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ ( ९-२९ )

This verse<sup>२९</sup> does not make it clear whether the devotee should necessarily be a pious and virtuous person. The doubt remains whether the Grace of the Lord is denied to a sinner. To this question a categorical and positive reply is found in the next verse:

अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।  
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ( ९-३० )

This verse clearly shows that the sinners are not to despair. The moment they take to the path of sincere devotion the Lord leads them to what is right and that too promptly .—

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।  
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ( ९-३१ )

The last line of this verse embodies The Lord’s great promise viz, “ My devotee shall not perish ”

These words of the merciful Lord have since then been carved on my heart and shall remain ever dear to me

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिसाक्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।  
 आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ १३.७ ॥  
 इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।  
 जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ १३.८ ॥  
 असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्ग पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।  
 नित्यं च समचित्तत्त्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ १३.९ ॥  
 मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।  
 विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ १३.१० ॥  
 अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।  
 एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ १३.११ ॥

*Translation :*

“ Humility ( absence of pride ), integrity ( absence of deceit ), non-violence, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the perceptor, purity, steadfastness, self-restraint; 7.

Aversion to the objects of senses, absence of egoism, perception of the evil of birth, death, oldage, disease and pain; 8.

Non-attachment, refusal to be engrossed in one's children, wife, home, and the like, constant even-mindedness whether good or evil befall ; 9.

Single and unswerving devotion to Me, resort to a place of solitude, distaste for the crowds of people ; 10.



Firm conviction that true knowledge is that of the Self, perception of the goal of the knowledge of Truth; all this is declared to be knowledge and the reverse of it is ignorance" 11.

The term knowledge in common parlance when used in connection with philosophy is generally taken to mean the act of understanding the nature of God, the individual soul, the universe and the intricate problem concerning them. He is regarded to be the great 'Jnanin' whose intellect penetrates the maze of appearances, expounds very difficult problems like 'Mayavada' and gives an idea of Ultimate Reality. Mere complete mastery over the science of philosophy and mere capacity to give a lucid exposition of it is not, however, countenanced by the Bhagawadgita as a means to attain Salvation.

Knowledge cannot be acquired by a person with the help of supreme intelligence only. It is rather within the reach of strenuous efforts by a man who has faith and complete mastery over the senses. The shining self is already in you but is obscured by lust, wrath and other passions just as fire by smoke and a mirror by dust. When the mind runs after the objects of the unbridled senses, the power of understanding also goes astray. He alone who has control over his senses is able to have secure understanding. But if the senses are allowed to have their own way, they go headlong towards the objects of satisfaction. They have great craving for these objects and when frustrated one gets annoyed and loses all balance. One gets more and more infatuated and that leads to the loss of memory. This ultimately culminates in the ruin of reason. Passions are never satisfied by enjoyment. They get the better of reason and completely overpower it. Only he, who has full control over his senses, gets serene and secure understanding and attains knowledge. Emancipation from the dominance of senses develops serenity which gives birth to knowledge.

The commentary of Sri Shankaracharya on the Bhagawadgita is everywhere respected as work of high authority. While interpreting these couplets he says that in this list beginning from 'absence of pride' and ending with 'perception of the goal of the knowledge of Truth', Lord Krishna has enumerated the means of attaining knowledge. The means are called the ends as the practice of the former is of great assistance to and verily leads to the attainment of the latter.

Jnaneshwara, the great and gifted saint of Maharashtra and who is styled as the king of 'Jnanins' by saint Tukaram, regards the high virtues mentioned in these stanzas as the result of outward expression of the knowledge within. Just as the light flooding out from a transparent glass is the expression of the flame lit within, so the virtues which are mentioned here are the manifest signs of the refulgent knowledge which resides within the heart.

What is good as a means to a supreme end comes out as a sweet and benign fruit of the same end. The way to self-realisation lies in the practice of high virtues and these in turn are the surest consequence of self-realisation. Moral life is the necessary result of spiritual insight. Till the latter is gained moral rules are obeyed in external fashion, and on self-realisation they flow as a matter of course. The definition of knowledge given in the above passage by the Gita will show that knowledge and morality are not two separate entities but are two sides of the same coin.

Ignorance is defined in this passage as the reverse of knowledge. Hence whatever is opposed to high qualities mentioned here is the expression of ignorance enveloping the reason and heart. Pride, arrogance, violence, unforgiveness, crookedness, impurity, unsteadiness, want of self-control, craving for the objects of sense, egoism, getting engrossed in one's children, wife, home, etc losing balance of mind by pain or pleasure or while in favourable or adverse circumstances, want of faith in God, permanent values and the preceptor, these and other vices are the contents of ignorance. Virtues are invariable associates of knowledge, while vices are inseparable companions of ignorance. Vices lead to utter destruction, but virtues come to one's rescue in any calamity. Virtues are pointers of knowledge, and vices of ignorance. A person who attains knowledge and salvation as its consequence, is said to have transcended all qualities and gone beyond all rules of conduct. This is misinterpreted by some to mean that such a man may commit any misdeed and still be not tainted by it. The Gita does not countenance such a view. To be above all rules, does not mean to be exempt from them. One who goes above the plane of virtues is far above the plane of vices as well. He reaches a height to which our rules do not apply. But his state is so lofty and of unadulterated bliss that whatever he does on reaching it, is necessarily good and virtuous. He may not be bound by rules of ethics,

but rules of ethics as expressed by Jnaneshwar in his inimitable way, take birth in his behaviour. There is no 'ought' to a man of perfection but his very conduct is natural expression of the rules of morality.

Some Western scholars and writers on Hindu philosophy and ethics, like Professors Keith and Mackenzi criticise that Hindu philosophy leaves no scope for morality. They say "According to this philosophy the Brahman or the Supreme Self has no form and is void of any attributes; that the individual soul is a part of Brahman, which is all-pervading and has no real duty to perform; that this world has no real existence but is 'Avidya' that is, mere illusion and that salvation lies in understanding the true nature of Brahman, the individual soul and the world. The moment the individual soul acquires this knowledge it becomes free from 'Avidya' and gets merged in the Brahman. Mere knowledge is enough to attain salvation. Even the greatest sinner is absolved from all sins if he gets this knowledge. This efficacy of knowledge and the all-pervasive nature of Brahman, free from all attributes, leave no scope for devotion or morality". Even Prof. Max Muller the great appreciator of the Vedas and Vedanta has remarked "As a popular philosophy Vedanta would have its dangers, that it would fail to call out and strengthen the manly qualities required for the practical side of life, and that it might raise the human mind to a height from which the most essential virtues of social and political life might dwindle away into phantoms".

These objections are taken without the proper comprehension of the doctrines of Vedanta and without a clear conception of the term 'knowledge' used in Indian philosophy. The individual soul is a part of the universal soul but the former is unable to realise this as it is shrouded in 'Avidya' or ignorance. All the miseries from which the individual soul suffers are the effects of ignorance. The destruction of ignorance is the first thing to be achieved. Mere intellectual knowledge is not enough to get rid of ignorance. The knowledge that body has become dirty by filth and that a wash with soap is the proper remedy to remove it will not in itself be sufficient to restore it to cleanliness, the actual process of such a wash has to be gone through to get the desired result. Just as the dust on the mirror has to be removed in order

to get a clear view of our face, in the same way 'Avidya', with its tendencies towards sin and all that is evil which has shrouded our inner self, has to be rooted out to get a clear perception of the soul. This can only be achieved by practising virtues mentioned in the above passage, which lead to knowledge and destruction of 'Avidya'. Then alone will the unity of the individual and universal soul be realised. The term knowledge in Indian philosophy means spiritual realisation and not mere intellectual understanding. The highest morality is a pathway to spiritual experience and the attainment of it again is a fountain-source of lofty morals. Nowhere is this aspect of knowledge more vividly presented than in this unique passage. Even the greatest sinner has a chance of salvation by attaining knowledge, but he can attain it only by getting rid of his sins by devotion to God and practising the above virtues. The emphasis on knowledge necessarily means an emphasis on morals as well.

That this world is a mere illusion or hallucination is not the correct interpretation of 'Maya' or 'Avidya'. Even Shankaracharya, the great exponent of the doctrine of 'Maya' recognises the practical existence of this world. The world is unreal in the sense that it is always changing and not eternal as compared with the Supreme Self. If we lose sight of the eternal and get fascinated by this changing world and allow ourselves to be entangled by its allurements, we are sure to come to grief. So long as we are alive we are bound to pass our life in this world and come in contact with the society in which we are born. What the Gita preaches is to have firm faith in God and do one's duty with the attitude of non-attachment. No one can avoid action so long as the body lives. Action is inevitable, but in order to avoid evil and misery it must be done with a sense of duty and not with avarice or urge of self-interest. One should be God-centred not self-centred. This state of mind is reached by piety and virtuous conduct. Then alone will the light of knowledge be kindled in the heart. This is the Path for going from unreal to the real. Thus the unreal nature of the world is no hindrance in the way of practising virtues, but on the contrary should serve as an incentive to devotion to God and to moral life.

The next objection, that the Brahman is all-pervasive and without any form or attributes and that the individual soul being

part of it gets merged in it on attaining knowledge, leaves no scope for moral conduct or at any rate takes one to such a lofty height that moral conduct may dwindle away into phantoms, is also not well founded. The Brahman is all Eternal Bliss. All good attributes which we know in this world fall too short of describing that Bliss. Hence our attempt at such description is styled "not this, not this". The Supreme Bliss is transcendental and beyond any description. That does not mean that high morals and virtues have no real value in this world. They enable one to get knowledge and attain self-realisation which lets one into the Supreme Bliss.

The identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul should be no obstacle but the greatest imaginable incentive to lead a virtuous and vigorous life. That every individual soul is a part of the Supreme Soul means that all individual souls are equal and of the same stuff and have identical interest. No better and closer relationship than this can be possibly imagined. They thus owe a responsibility to be good to each other and strive for the good of all. This relationship supplies the best foundation for ethical conduct. The horrors of the two world wars have startled ethical scholars and they think that the erstwhile theories of ethics fall short to offer adequate basis for enunciating rules of morality, on national and international plane for securing peace in the world and good to humanity.

The theory of utilitarianism, namely 'the greatest good of the greatest number' propounded by ethical thinkers like Mill and Bentham, apart from its failure to take into account the motive of the doer, neglects to consider the plight of those who get omitted from the 'greatest number'. At no time was this defect in this theory so vividly exposed as at the time of the second world war. The atrocities committed and horrors inflicted upon Jewish minority in Germany, gave a rude shock to the whole world and set the ethical scholars thinking. The miseries showered by majorities on minorities elsewhere in the world and the pitiable condition to which the latter were reduced, brought to light the same lacuna in this ethical thinking. What was happiness for the majority was hell for the minority and the theory of 'the greatest good of the greatest number' proved to

be a curse to the minority. Can we now justify this rule as a good one for ethical conduct? Modern thinkers like Hopkins and Ewing feel that it is not; but they are at a loss to know what should be the proper basis for righteous conduct.

The Vedantic doctrine of the identity of the universal and individual souls offers the surest foundation for ethical conduct. Lokamanya Tilak has long pointed this out in his *Gitarahasya*. The most essential virtues instead of dwindling into phantoms from the height to which this doctrine leads, gain greater inspiration and strength for the service of humanity. The unity of souls is the strongest tie and incentive for being good to each other and striving for the good of all. It places the responsibility on everybody's shoulder to be kind to all and harmful to none. Ahimsa or non-injury is a corollary of this doctrine. Injury to none and peace to all mankind can be secured by translating into action the virtues taught by the ethics of this philosophy. Thus instead of leading to the negation of any urge for moral life it serves as an incentive to it. In these days of the mad race for nuclear weapons with utter disregard for its consequences, and headlong rush towards lovelessness and destruction, the only hope for the humanity lies in the acceptance of the doctrine of non-injury. This is the greatest contribution to ethics by Indian philosophy. Unity of souls is its fundamental theory and non-injury is its logical corollary. They are the surest foundations for ethical rules. Even Prof. Hopkins who does not fully endorse the teachings of Hindu philosophy believes that its doctrine of non-injury is capable of bringing peace to the world.

On noticing the atrocities of the second world war, Aldus Huxley, the author of perennial philosophy, feels convinced that action with non-attachment taught by the Gita, and the doctrine of non-injury will be the correct attitude to ensure peace to the world living under the constant threat of total annihilation by atomic weapons.

In the opinion of Lokamanya Tilak the Bhagawadgita is a scientific work on both philosophy and ethics. The passage under discussion is a vivid and typical illustration in support of this view.

The Bhagawadgita is a mine of jewels. Each of them has a

peculiar lustre of its own and attractive in its own way. It is very difficult to make a selection from them and to point out that this is the best of all. But when confronted with a particular problem some stanza or stanzas in the Gita offer the needed solution. In the present crisis in the world we eagerly look to that which will bring peace to humanity. Good not only of the majority but of everyone, must be the goal. A foundation for ethics which will secure this end is of the utmost importance. I have dealt with this topic above and have shown how the Gita deals with the discussion of the philosophical aspect and also considers the ethical side of knowledge as well. Every advanced laboratory in the world is engaged today in the research of finding out the deadliest missile which will give that nation supremacy over the rest. All are talking of peace but are actually preparing for war. Not only the goal but the means to reach it must also be good. The emphasis of the Gita is both on knowledge and ethics. The passage in it which strikes me most from this point of view is selected by me for this article.

Again, another problem which everyone has to face today, is the self-centred attitude among high and low alike. This is the cause of misery around us. Corruption, malpractices and utter disregard for human values, have become rampant now-a-days. Modern science has shaken man's faith in religion and has created a void. New values which are being propounded are still in a flux and unable to fill the void. It appears as if we are heading towards chaos. The whole social organisation is out of gear. Is there any thing which will cry halt and restore harmony and order? I feel that the philosophy and the ethics of the Bhagavadgita have got the requisite capacity to achieve this. The unity of souls and the goal of self-realisation is the highest philosophy and the practice of virtues is a means to attain this goal. Ethical values are corollaries of this philosophy. Hence, philosophy is not a pursuit for mere intellectual satisfaction, but a science of life to be translated into action by practising its virtues which ennoble our life. The teaching of the Gita is not only for the benefit of an individual but for the good of the whole society and mankind. The Gita does not lay stress on knowledge only but on morality as well. This passage lays down that ethics is a part and parcel of and indissoluble from knowledge. The Gita is a philosophy

of life. Its teaching, if followed, will remove all evils in our life and enrich it. It will be an antidote against all diseases the society is suffering from today. Bare intellectual knowledge is not sufficient; the practice of virtues is of supreme importance for attaining the goal. This is established with the greatest clarity by the passage under discussion and hence it has impressed me most.

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